DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 347 503 CS 010 976

AUTHOR	Koebler, Saundra, Comp.; And Others
TITLE	Literacy through Literature. Proceedings of the Annual Conference and Course on Literacy (38th, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 1991).
INSTITUTION	Pittsburgh Univ., Pa. School of Education.
PUB DATE	Jun 91
NOTE	102p.; For the 1990 proceedings, see ED 329 900.
AVAILABLE FROM	University of Pittsburgh, Forbes Quadrangle 5T, Pittsburgh, PA 15260 ($5.00).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Early Childhood Education; Ethics; Family Involvement; Junior High Schools; *Literacy; *Literature Appreciation; Middle Schools; Multicultural Education; Poetry; *Reading Habits; Social Studies; Student Writing Models; Summer Programs; Thinking Skills; Whole Language Approach; World War II
IDENTIFIERS	*Emergent Literacy; Lifelong Readers

ABSTRACT

This conference proceedings is the result of a week-long conference and course focusing on the use of literature programs in the development of literacy skills and the attainment of broader educational outcomes. The proceedings includes speeches by keynote speakers, session presentations, graduate student papers, and middle school student papers. Keynote papers are: "Acting Meaning: The Play of Reading" (Shirley Brice Heath and Shelby Anne Wolf); "Remembering Pennsylvania" (Lois Lowry); "Families and Literacy: Building Social and Cultural Continuity" (Vivian L. Gadsden); "The Secret of the Lifetime Reader or the Clue in the Classroom" (Elizabeth Segel); and "The Secret of the Life-Long Reader or the Clue in the Classroom" (Margaret Mary Kimmel). Session presentations are: "Helping Parents and Teachers Develop Positive Dispositions toward Reading in Preschool Children" (Donna DiPrima Bickel); "Rights without Labels: A Mainstreaming Project" (Nicolette Armstrong and others); "Literacy through Experimental Verse: Selected Works of e. e. Cummings" (Albert C. Labriola); "Enriching Early Literacy with Long-Term Projects" (Jeanette Allison Hartman); "The Heartwood Project: An Ethics Curriculum for Children" (Eleanor Gettleman and others); "Liberty, Learning, and Literacy: Promoting Higher Order Thinking in the Social Studies Classroom" (Caryn M. King and William E. McDonald); "Teaching after the Summer Institute: Where I've Been and Where I'm Going" (Mimi Botkin); "Reaching back, Moving Forward: An Intergenerational Approach to Literacy and Literature" (George R. Skornickel, Jr.); "Promoting Literacy through Bibliotherapy" (Lelia Allen); "The Ethnic Mosaic: Multicultural Books for All Our Children" (Joan Brest Friedberg); and "Writing Workshops for Children" (Karen Waggoner). The three graduate student papers are: "Whole Language Makes Learning Fun, Even in High School" (Shandel Gilbert); "Ownership" (Marion E. Gosson); and "World War II: Through the Eyes of Literature" (Elizabeth Tihey Harbist and Edith P. Jones). The five middle school papers, briefly introduced by Patricia Thomas, are: "Being Black In America" (Sahara Bey); "Untitled" (Edward Caldwell); "When I Grow Up" (Brandy Fleming); "My Scariest Experience" (Maurice Harvey); and "Untitled" (Erica Hatcher). (RS)

ED347503

38th Annual Conference and Course on Literacy

LITERACY THROUGH LITERATURE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Rita Bean
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

CS010576

University of Pittsburgh
School of Education
Institute for Practice and Research in Education
School of Library and Information Sciences
Department of Instruction and Learning
June, 1991

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

LITERACY THROUGH LITERATURE

Proceedings of the 38th Annual Conference and Course on Literacy June, 1991

Compiled and edited

by

Saundra Koebler, Stephen A. Kirsch, Rita M. Bean

University of Pittsburgh
School of Education
Institute for Practice and Research in Education
School of Library and Information Sciences
Department of Instruction and Learning

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Conference Coordinator

Saundra Koebler

Conference Planning Committee

Rita Bean; Judith DeAngelis; Carla Hayden;
Margaret Mary Kimmel; Caryn King; Steve Koziol;
John Manear; Roberta Schomberg; Patricia Severance

SPECIAL THANKS

Pinocchio Bookstore

Strand Facilitators

Vicky Al-Ebrahim
Barb Fotta
Betty Goerss
Beverly Hall
Becky Hamilton
Meryl Lazar
Linda McDonald
Wendy Salvatore

Technical Assistance

Alberta Asbury
Sarah Gordon
Nioucha Homayonfar
Rachel Hui
Virginia Hunt
Melissa Scipio

Table of Contents

Opening Remarks

Kenneth F. Metz — i

Keynote Speakers

Shirley Brice Heath (written with Shelby Anne Wolf) — *Acting Meaning: The Play of Reading* — 1

Lois Lowry — *Remembering Pennsylvania* — 15

Vivian L. Gadsden — *Families and Literacy: Building Social and Cultural Continuity* — 21

Elizabeth Segel — *The Secret of the Lifetime Reader or The Clue in the Classroom* — 29

Margaret Mary Kimmel — *The Secret of the Life-Long Reader or The Clue in the Classroom* — 33

Session Presentations

Donna DiPrima Bickel — *Helping Parents and Teachers Develop Positive Dispositions Toward Reading in Preschool Children* — 37

Nicolette Armstrong, Debra Bennett, and Marlene Gardner — *Rights Without Labels: A Mainstreaming Project* — 39

Albert C. Labriola — *Literacy Through Experimental Verse: Selected Works of e. e. Cummings* — 41

Jeanette Allison Hartman — *Enriching Early Literacy with Long-Term Projects* — 48

Eleanore Gettleman, Penny Levy, Nancy Pichert, and Pat Wood — *The Heartwood Project: An Ethics Curriculum for Children* — 52

Caryn M. King and William E. McDonald	*Liberty, Learning, and Literacy: Promoting Higher Order Thinking in the Social Studies Classroom*	55
Mimi Botkin	*Teaching After the Summer Institute: Where I've Been and Where I'm Going*	59
George R. Skornickel, Jr.	*Reaching Back, Moving Forward: An Intergenerational Approach to Literacy and Literature*	65
Lelia Allen	*Promoting Literacy Through Bibliotherapy*	69
	Authors' Session	
Joan Brest Friedberg	*The Ethnic Mosaic: Multicultural Books for All Our Children*	75
Karen Waggoner	*Writing Workshops for Children*	78
	Graduate Student Papers	
Shandel Gilbert	*Whole Language Makes Learning Fun, Even in High School*	81
Marion E. Gosson	*Ownership*	84
Elizabeth Tihey Harbist and Edith P. Jones	*World War II: Through the Eyes of Literature*	88
	Middle School Student Papers	
Patricia Thomas	*Introduction*	95
Sahara Bey	*Being Black in America*	96
Edward Caldwell	*Untitled*	96
Brandy Fleming	*When I Grow Up*	97
Maurice Harvey	*My Scariest Experience*	97
Erica Hatcher	*Untitled*	97

Opening Remarks

Kenneth F. Metz, Interim Dean
School of Education, University of Pittsburgh

Good Afternoon:

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the faculty and staff of the Institute for Practice and Research, the Department of Instruction and Learning, School of Education and from the School of Library and Information Science, to welcome you to the University of Pittsburgh for this 38th Annual Conference and Course on Literacy.

Over the years this conference has been offered in several different forms -- as an intensive one day forum, as a weekend event in either Spring or Fall, or similar to the current format as a week long conference and/or course. The first twenty of these events were referred to as conferences on Reading -- most recently, however, recognizing the importance of all the language competencies (reading, writing, listening and speaking), the title has included, as it does this year, the term Literacy. But regardless of the format, time of year and title, this conference has always provided an avenue for education professionals to share their knowledge and new insights, and to interact and dialogue with others about their beliefs, issues and concerns relative to literacy instruction.

Certainly this year's conference is no exception -- the title *Literacy Through Literature*, continues to direct our attention to the concerns identified in research studies completed during the last two or three years. The findings reflect that approximately half of the students studied report reading 10 or fewer pages each day, students' interest in books appears to decline as they progress through school, and much of the instruction in schools takes place at a rather superficial level with little opportunity to discuss, analyze and write about what is read.

Your program for this year's conference and course is replete with topics focusing on the use of literature programs in the development of literacy skills and the attainment of broader educational outcomes. In reviewing the list of presenters and speakers and the list of those registered for the conference, it is clear we are all in for an exciting and stimulating week -- one which I am sure will enable all of us to leave these sessions better prepared to do our part in ensuring quality eduction for our young people.

Again, welcome. It is our hope that you will have a productive and worthwhile experience with us this week.

Acting Meaning: The Play of Reading

Shirley Brice Heath and Shelby Anne Wolf
Stanford University

A young child can enter the world of story as easily as Cinderella stepping into the pumpkin carriage. Yet the adult, attempting to capture the child's response to literature, is left with her nose bumping against the carriage window and wondering how to get inside. How can adults negotiate through the winding paths of children's play, talk, emotions, and movements to understand how children use literature to act and enact meanings?

In the past decade, anthropologists and linguists have given considerable attention to this and related questions as they have immersed themselves in the lives of children interacting with literature across a variety of cultural and social situations. Anthropologists look within the particulars of lives lived in such variety in order to distinguish those patterns of behaving and believing that might be universal from those that are unique to particular individuals and situations or cultures.

This paper reports mutual explorations on these issues over the past few years--explorations of vastly different families and cultures done in unison of method and goal. Wolf's participation and observation have been within her own dual roles as parent-educator and interpretive social scientist; Heath's participation and observation have been within her dual roles of anthropologist and linguist.[1] Both talk from what anthropologists often refer to as "piles of data" and "miles of audiotapes." Supplementary to the usual field notes and audio or videotapes is information gained from bringing those being studied into the work as co-interpreters. Questions were asked of those reading and being read to, and data were shared with them to gain their contemporary and retrospective perspectives.

The goal in the cross-cultural comparative frames outlined here is to address two broad questions that also embrace the often difficult issue of whether different cultural backgrounds offer appropriate substitutes that can do as much for social and cognitive development as professionals in children's literature seem to claim for a childhood rich with children's literature and numerous book reading episodes between adult and child. Simply put, the first question stresses the holistic effects of children's literature--from illustration, to word choice, to the moments of reading set aside from the ordinary rush of daily life. What happens within the reading experience that appears to have lasting influences on cognitive, social, imaginary, and critical capacities? The second question asks: Where does children's literature go? What happens to the reading experience once the immediate situation of adult and child reading a book or telling a story together is over? Those familiar with research in the traditions of cultural anthropology (often referred to currently as "ethnography") will recognize that both of these questions center on "what

happens?" and depend therefore on long-term close observations and some autobiographical accounts from participants themselves.

The discussion of these questions is based on two cases. The first is that of a mainstream literature-oriented family with two children, with close observations of those children by their parents over nine years. The second is that of a school-dropout single parent with four children over a period of six years.[2]

Shelby's journey into the world of children and their connection with literature began with an insight from her daughter Lindsey, who is now nine years old. Shelby had been a primary teacher for years and had loved children's literature for a long time prior, but Lindsey gave a new way of looking at literature. On this particular spring afternoon (only a few months after Lindsey's third birthday), a friend telephoned and Lindsey ran to answer the phone. She had on two dresses, one over the other, to create a "ballgown" and she carried a long-stemmed tulip to serve as a "magic wand".

"Lindsey?" Shelby's friend questioned.

"No, this is Cinderella," Lindsey replied. She stated that there was no 'Shelby' here and that since she was busy getting ready for the ball she had little time to talk." (March, 1986, 3;4 years) As Shelby retrieved the phone, she began to think about Lindsey's intensity of response to literature. Lindsey had immersed herself so deeply in the character that it was easy to forget the ordinary, day-to-day polite requirements necessary to answering the telephone, and instead to continue her fantastic preparations for the ball.

Playing the Role of Active Reader

For Lindsey, and later for her baby sister Ashley, children's literature provided the scripts and themes to be explored and tested against life. Their responses to a story were often not verbalized in direct statements, such as "I like this story, but I don't like that one." Instead, they enacted their responses in their play. They answered the question noted above--"Where does literature go?" by stretching their thoughts about the stories they heard into action. An incident that took place on New Year's Day in 1991 illustrates some of the paths of response to Cinderella's story that Lindsey and Ashley took.

Shelby was taking a nap when she heard the shrill voices of children and what she thought was an argument. But when she checked, she found both Lindsey and Ashley, along with their neighborhood friend, Andrea, in full costume spontaneously playing Cinderella. Lindsey, dressed in torn jeans and soccer shirt, played the subservient maiden, bringing breakfast in bed to Ashley and Andrea, the demanding stepsisters. As the play shifted to the dining room, and Andrea and Ashley ordered more food with accusing fingers and dissatisfied glares, Lindsey kept a calm countenance. When she spilled some milk on the table, she stayed in character and apologized profusely, while Andrea played her anger to the hilt. All three children held to the roles of their

characters, for as the Soviet psychologist L. S. Vygotsky (1978) suggests, play is bound by rules. Arguing against notions of egocentrism in children's play, Vygotsky highlighted the fact that in play, children do not play themselves, but they play others; thus they do not enact their own responses, but the actions and reactions of the characters of the texts they have assumed as their own for the current time.

Lindsey's understanding of the story and the rules of characters was not confined just to dramatic productions. Instead, she could take what she knew from the story and analogize it to her own life. One early afternoon when Lindsey was three, she and Shelby cleaned the kitchen together, and while Shelby scrubbed the floor, Lindsey began rubbing away the grease stains on the oven door.

"Thanks for helping me, Sweetie," Shelby cajoled. "It's great not to have to do all the work by myself." Lindsey turned and spread out her hands with a shrug. "You're not Cinderella! I'm not the ugly step-sister! You don't have to do all the work!" (April 16, 1987, 3;5 years). Creating a verbal analogy between her role and that of her mother and linking these to story characters was a telling example of Lindsey's play. The words "all the work," triggered a verbal connection that unleashed an entire metaphorical set of images, actions, and themes.

Work is one of life's harsh realities, but play softens the blow. As Lindsey cleaned up her stepsisters' tea things in her New Year's Day drama of Cinderella, she turned to Shelby and said:

"You know, Mom. Now I can understand why you complain about doing all the dishes. It's a pain. But it's fun when you're playing. The next time I have to <u>really</u> clean something up, just tell me to <u>pretend</u> I'm Cinderella, and I'll do it." (January 1, 1991, 8;2 years). Still, as she returned to her role and finished up her task, she could not help but sit for a moment in her imaginary fireplace to reflect on the day's events. Her hands lay tiredly on her dishtowel-draped lap, her eyes downcast in sad contemplation. She sat in character, dejected and alone, overworked and unloved.

But this self-absorbed pensiveness vanished as the shrill voices of the ugly stepsisters beckoned her upstairs to help them prepare for the ball. Lindsey draped the sisters in beads and scarves, drawing from her beloved dressup box that above all other toys over the years had been her most-used. There she had collected jewels, veils, tiaras, hoods, and magic wands necessary to create every creature from princess to dragon. To her ugly stepsisters, she applied makeup--lipstick and blush, but continuously under the demanding eye of Andrea, who hissed sarcastically to point out spots Lindsey missed. Lindsey took her scolding with downcast eyes and dressed Andrea and Ashley, attending to every detail of their attire: draping the front of Ashley's dress with pearls, and wrapping another strand around Ashley's hand to create the effect of rings. Ashley, in the meantime, adopted the stance of the bored nouveau riche, her face in a pout, her eyes cast upward in haughty dissatisfaction.

Just as the moment came for Cinderella's sisters to leave for the ball, a fortuitous call came from the window below Lindsey and Ashley's bedroom. Another neighborhood friend, Daphne, was calling to see if the girls could play. Lindsey flung open the window and told her friend about the play already underway. She said that Daphne could come in if she would agree to play the handsome prince. When Daphne joined the game, she asked if she could play the fairy godmother instead. "No, no," Lindsey said. "We can skip her. We need the prince more!" and Andrea agreed. Lindsey ran for her father's sportscoat and a prince was made. Daphne further embellished her attire with a hairbow for a tie and a painted-on mustache.

Cutting an entire section of the plot presented no problem for the girls. With no one to play the fairy godmother, the girls eliminated the pumpkin coach and the mice footmen. Lindsey, a child of modern times, dressed herself. Without further ado, the ball began. While Andrea and Ashley tried to capture the prince's heart, Daphne played her role cordially, but with little sincere attention. Ashley looked down demurely, as any well-brought-up ugly step-sister should, but Andrea looked coquettishly over her shoulder trying to persuade the prince to notice her. The prince remained aloof, however, until the arrival of Cinderella. Then he bowed low, bewitched by Cinderella's smile. She was dressed in simple elegance--with few additional baubles and no make-up. As Lindsey told Shelby later: "I don't think she'd wear it, Mom."

As the play continued, they danced, exchanged vows, and Lindsey fled the room as the clock struck twelve. A proclamation was sent throughout the land, and because there was no one to play the squire, the prince himself came to fit the shoe on all eligible females in the household. Andrea made an attempt, gritting her teeth and exclaiming over the fit. Ashley too had her turn, holding onto the chair for support, but to no avail. Finally, it was Cinderella's turn, and Lindsey, dressed in rags, slipped her foot into the shoe with ease. Great rejoicing followed, though Ashley and Andrea filled the air with spiteful curses. Lindsey effected a quick change, and she and Daphne, her prince, were wed. This gratifying last scene, where all the pain of the past becomes insignificant in the pleasure of the present, is one that Lindsey had loved from childhood.

What can be learned from the literature play of young children? What does a spontaneously but elaborately staged production such as this--as well as less sustained or dramatic comments connecting life and literature--tell us? Initially, it is seen that literature is carried beyond the pages of the book and into the everyday play of children. Although the book is closed, the story is not forgotten, as children take the stories they love and bring them to life through play, enacting the themes and scenes that fit the props and actors of the moment. Enactment of the story holds attention and commitment across a span of time and a range of activities that engage talk, gesture, costume, props, staging, and negotiation of how currently available resources and personnel match those called for in the story.

Beyond this initial way of carrying literature outside the book and the moment of reading

is the evidence that the dramatic play of the girls demonstrates their understanding of the rule-bounded nature of literature and its dramatization. Each girl held to the intentions and motivations of the character she played. The anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1955) has told us of the strong evidence of metacognitive framing that announcements of play give. Children announce that play is "on" or it is "off." Lindsey's step to the window to shout down to Daphne the conditions of her entering their play was an "off" moment. Once Daphne was in costume, the play was once again "on." When children step out of character, to adjust a costume, look for an additional prop, or suggest a change in plot, they often do so with a comment such as, "Okay, wait a minute, while I get the wand," or "Let's skip the fairy godmother and just go on to the prince part." Through such talk, they signal a moment when they put the play on hold to analyze how it is going and what they might do to improve the play. Once they are back "in the play" however, they take on the perspective of the character, trying out and testing different ways of looking at the world. Though the rules of text are not rigidly adhered to, elements can be altered so long as they maintain the internal nature of the play's characters, their intentions and motivations.

The literary ownership that lies within such play is created out of the children's ability to select, edit, and enact a story, taking what they need both for the current production and their lives. When Lindsey commented, "The next time I have to <u>really</u> clean something up, just tell me to <u>pretend</u> I'm Cinderella and I'll do it," she elaborated on how elements of the story could help her in life--to soften the harsh realities of day-to-day chores, as well as to help Shelby understand how to make her own burden of housework lighter. When children have a sense of literary ownership over a story, they gain practice in negotiation and in exercising multiple ways of making meaning in the world.

All three of these points--the story beyond the page, the rule-bounded nature of literature, and ownership of the story--link to the reader's ability to shift perspectives. In taking on other characters, Lindsey and her friends could look on the world through different eyes, speak with changing voices, and move with alternative gestures through space.

In this case we have discussed where literature can go, but what of the first question posed above: What happens during the actual reading experience? In exploring this question, we will stay with the Cinderella theme as well as focus on children's ability to shift perspectives as they express their interpretations of story. Current research tells us that reading follows an individual path even as readers socially construct an interpretation of text, bringing personal experience, values, and opinions to bear on the written text. But what kinds of questions most encourage a personal response to literature? And what kinds of responses do children give to text when they have the opportunity to express their own ideas? More practically stated, how can it be known when there is a shift in perspective taking place as children react to literature and take it into their experiences with the everyday world?

A key piece of evidence for the answer to this question lies in queries and responses of the type "What would happen if ...?" or "I would...." or "I wonder why/how...." These kinds of responses open the world of the hypothetical and enable children to think about how the available opportunities and resources within the story limit or expand the possibilities of outcomes and choices. With Lindsey and Ashley, Shelby often asked them to put themselves into the story, to enter the world of the conditional or hypothetical. In so doing, the girls were not lost in the forest, falling down a rabbit hole, or looking for secret gardens, but they were able to step into the shoes of characters faced with these dilemmas and to make decisions for how they might respond.

In the story The Jolly Postman (Ahlberg and Ahlberg, 1986), a postman delivers letters to and from fairy tale characters. Goldilocks writes a letter of apology to Baby Bear; the Big Bad Wolf receives a letter of complaint from Red Riding Hood's lawyers; and a publishing company writes to Cinderella to ask permission to publish a book for young readers that will celebrate her recent marriage to Prince Charming. But Lindsey had a different idea.

"It should have been wrotten [sic] by her ugly sisters," she commented. And when I asked her why, she explained, "Cause her ugly sisters have to do something nice to her." "Yeah, maybe so," I replied. "But they're such bad characters, do you think they'd want to portray themselves...could you write about yourself being so bad?" "Uh-hmmm," Lindsey decided in the affirmative, "but I wouldn't publish it. I'd just give one copy to Cinderella and never make any more copies!" (February 7, 1990, 7;3 years).

When authors do not seem consistent within their own themes--across books, or in their portrayal of characters within stories, readers may need to explain their sources, their inspiration, or what appears to be their temporary misguidedness. Lindsey had little understanding of a publisher's motivation or the fact that this story was headed for the bestseller list. But what she well understood was that the ugly stepsisters owed Cinderella an apology--and a book was one way to do it. In her response she shifted back and forth between her own interpretation of what the stepsisters should do and her personal advice on how she would do it. While she did not mind the public embarrassment the sisters might suffer, for her own part, she preferred to keep the whole issue a little quieter. The apology was for Cinderella, not the world.

Criticisms of authorial decisions and character motivations often come from personal experience, but they also come through the buildup of many stories. Children who have spent time in the world of the fairy tale, for example, recognize that the word stepsister is a signal to inevitable jealousy and anger. Through multiple stories, children come to have expectations for the behavior of characters. They recognize the roles and detailed characteristics of fairies, for example, and giants, and dwarfs. When a story character aspires to step into another role, such as an ugly stepsister with goals of becoming a queen, children are quick to dash these unreasonable wishes to the ground.

A clear example of this comes from another exquisite story with a Cinderella-like theme--John Steptoe's Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters (1987). In the story, an African noble has two beautiful daughters. One is kind and good, and the other mean and spiteful. A king calls for all the beauties in the land to come to his court so he can choose a wife. The mean daughter, Manyara rushes ahead to the court in order to beat her sweet sister Nyasha to the prince. On her way Manyara has many opportunities to prove her generosity and kindness, but she fails every test.

One afternoon Shelby read the story to Lindsey and her friend Shanna. They reached the part in the story when the mean sister meets a small boy in the forest, begging for food. The text tells of how the mean sister refuses the boy's insistent pleas that he is hungry. She tells him to move out of her way and to let her proceed. Lindsey became very excited and shouted, "Well, she's...she's...anyway she's going to get...We'll show her!"

Shanna nodded and said, "She's gotten meaner."

"You think she'd be a very good queen if she refused a hungry boy food?" I asked. "No way!" Lindsey stressed her point and Shanna shook her head in agreement.

I continued reading the story, but Lindsey stopped me within a few lines to comment. "She's so mean!" she exclaimed. "If I did that I would...I would bring...I would give the little boy, like, two bags of whatever he wanted."

Shanna agreed, "If she was going to be queen...I mean, like, she wouldn't really need it. She could maybe find some stuff for herself. I mean she could give him maybe a third of it."

"Like she could let him come with her," Lindsey explained.

"Yeah." Shanna agreed. (September 25, 1988, 5;10 years).

Conditional constructions and pronoun shifts in the text show Shanna's and Lindsey's ability to shift perspectives between their own motivations and the rule-bound characterization of what it means to be a queen. In this kind of talk, children problem-solve, compare and contrast texts on the page and in life, and reach analytical as well as personal conclusions. Both girls were trying to contrast their own behaviors with that of the character of Manyara. While the character was stingy, Lindsey and Shanna wanted to claim generosity; while Manyara was mean, they wanted kindness. They tried to justify their positions in both affective and cognitive terms, insisting that a "good" queen would never refuse a starving boy, first, because of basic human kindness and, second, through a logical assessment of just how much a queen possessed and how easy it should be for her to share her wealth.

Within storybook interaction, children show their shifts in perspective through their use of conditional constructions such as: "if I..." or "She could...if...." The psychologist Jerome Bruner (1986) has linked the conditional with "stance," suggesting that while some questions are designed to test knowledge, others negotiate "the world of wonder and possibility." In their storybook discussions, Shelby and Lindsey played out such negotiations through their frequent use of "what

if?" queries. Their questions and comments were minor enactments of alternative scenes, motivations, and possibilities; in addition, their entry into the conditional stance allowed both to express personal opinion, think through a problem, and shift between storybook characters and their own sense of themselves as characters.

This shift in perspective is integral both to interactions with the book and to children's enactment of a story long after the book is closed. Lindsey and her friends transformed and dramatized characters and their events to create fantasy worlds in their everyday play. While reading the story, they used what they knew of story and life to analyze the emotions and motivations of the characters and the author--to explain their personal points of view and possible trajectories for the story. Children show their rich capabilities for both creative and critical interpretations of text when given opportunities to act out, think about, and create stories from stories.

This is not to say, however, that opportunities to talk about and act out stories guarantee that children will become smooth decoders. Reading is a complex activity that requires familiarity with the patterns within and between words, and those patterns quite often need to be amplified by direct instruction from an expert reader. Just as talk about many different stories and types of stories allows children to grow in understanding diverse character motivations and influences, so talk about the patterns of language enables children to decode familiar words as well as to unlock new configurations.

For as much experience as Lindsey had with text, she had difficulty with decoding. At the end of her year in first grade, she was still unsure of herself and feeling frustrated with the fact that the words on the page did not reveal themselves in the same way that images and themes did. Shelby and Lindsey, therefore, spent the summer between first and second grades focusing on decoding, talking about the patterns of language rather than the patterns of people's behaviors and thoughts. By the time she entered second grade, Lindsey read more independently and comfortably. While it would be easy to be enchanted with children's imaginative performances and thoughtful comments, it is only through careful observation and questioning that the full scope of a child's reading, both the larger thematic issues as well as the specific skills to unlock language, is revealed.

Thus to understand young children's responses to literature as well as their grasp of language patterns on the page, the researcher, teacher, or parent also has to shift perspectives and study all their behaviors around and with written text from the child's point of view. By looking at what young children do with storybooks, both open and closed, both at the time of reading and beyond, educators can begin to see how literateness weaves in and out of the lives of young children. And if we watch and listen carefully enough, we too may find a way to shift from our interpretations of what children's responses "should" be into what it "would" be as they step into the carriage and make their way into the world.

Neither extensive training nor prior theoretical positions are needed to guide such inquiry. The second case picks up both of the previous questions: What happens in reading children's literature, and where does it go? But the mother in this case is Charlene Thomas, a high-school dropout who had her first child, De, at the age of 14, and her second, Tutti, at the age of 15. With the encouragement of her teacher, Amanda Branscombe, Charlene began reading books to De while awaiting Tutti's birth. Amanda went each week or so and listened to the tapes and asked what De's responses had been during the reading. Gradually, Charlene talked more and more about her own realization of what reading with someone else meant. She pointed out what many thoughtful adolescents see in school: most school reading is not reading with, but reading to or for, and audience interaction does not occur, since the reading is singularly focused and often task or performance specific. That is, students read to find the answer or they read in round-robin fashion, because it is their time to display as an individual that they can mouth the words from the page.

Over the course of fifteen months, Charlene saw De's experiences of talking about books with her open up conversational and exploratory routes between mother and child. In essence, the books and the stories that came after De began reading with his mother seemed to generate the view on Charlene's part that De had something to say, that his own thoughts and experiences were worth her solicitation. When De's young brother Tutti came along, she read to both of them together. On a tape recorded when Tutti was one year old and De a little over two, Charlene gave De directions on how to read to Tutti: "Get down and read Tutti a story. Let him see one [book] and you read him one." (April, 1983). Later that same month, Charlene asked De to read with her: "Come on and let Mama read about the little elephant. Come on up here. Come sit right here. Say 'little elephant.'" Charlene's intonation here was invitational, as a teacher's might be, and she announced the topic to De before opening the storybook. Throughout the story, she asked De questions, but he interrupted, saying "Mama, dere cat [or other animals pictured in the book], mama."[3] Throughout the story, De connected the text to his own experiences. In a portion of the text that shows animals playing cards, De commented: "Playing cards right dere. I play cards up at Jack's house." In a story about a rabbit, he interrupted Charlene's reading to give the first recorded voluntary account of an event in which Charlene had not shared.

> "Look, Ma, look Ma, look Ma, at that rabbit. I get another one, I get another one, a rabbit. Get rabbit up Mel's house, Get rabbit up Mel's house. Get rabbit up Mel's house."

During the next month, De consistently stopped the reading sessions to give an account of his own experience with events or items from the stories: a birthday cake, a cat in a tree, cars on the road, and so on. When Charlene and De read a book about an elephant's birthday party to which a cat had been invited, De noticed a box of cornflakes pictured in one of the illustrations.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

He had recently been to his cousin Re's house, where he had cornflakes for the first time. He read to his mother, and then broke in with his account of his own adventure:

> "On el go, el go, el go walk, two el right dere. De and the el eat cornflakes. De eat cornflakes at Re's house. De eat cake at Re's house. Look Ma, happy birthday to you [he then sings "happy birthday"]." (April 18, 1983).

Tutti's birthday was to be in a few days, and De had been practicing the happy birthday song. In his mingling of the book's story and his own real-life account, De fictionalized himself (both he and the elephant ate cornflakes), and he added background information to which Charlene had no access (his eating cornflakes at Re's house). De then returned to the book, however, repeating "birthday cat" several times and telling his mother to look at the cat eating birthday cake. Charlene asked: "Whose birthday is it?" to which De responded "cat," but Charlene corrected him by saying "Tutti's birthday." De, however, continued to focus on the book, ignoring Charlene, and went on to tell his own story about the cat eating cornflakes and the elephant having a birthday party.

De's experiences with books and book talks with his mother enabled him not only to recap into brief narratives his own past experiences, but also to project himself into the future in eventcasts or brief scenarios of the future. Within a month after the episodes above, Charlene and several adults were talking in the background while De played alone nearby. He began talking to himself.

> "I read. I play football. I got my foot. I got my schoolwork. I play football. I played basketball. I played baseball. I got school. I get my book." (May 18, 1983).

This episode echoes a conversation that had taken place about a month earlier when De and Charlene had together talked about school in response to a question Charlene had put to De:

> "You wanna go to school?" De had responded: "Me go to school. Go school bus. School bus come down house. School bus come down house. Ma go school. Ma go school [looking up at Charlene quizzically]?"

In May, when De began talking about school to himself while playing on the floor, Charlene overheard him and interrupted her talk with adults in the room to ask: "You don't go to school. When you go to school?" De answered "Today." Charlene said "No" and De tried "Tomorrow?" Charlene giggled and said "You have to wait for you to go to school."

These brief episodes were the beginning of De's entry into narrative and fictional accounts of himself. Throughout his second year, De continued to tell stories to himself and to Tutti while he played; his favorite motif became fishing, an activity he had never seen except on television. Charlene did not ask him to tell these stories, and she did not try to correct his excursions into fantasy. In her continuing talks with Branscombe over the tape recordings of De's stories, she reported that by June, he had begun to "write." When asked by either Branscombe or Charlene

to label separate items in his drawings, he would refuse, remaining silent. Only when he had completed his writing would he announce "a story." He would tell about what had occurred in the writing by giving a script: "A bear, A bear comes and eats the fish" (June 15, 1983). His drawings by this time reflected the representation of motion described for preschoolers who embellish their drawing with long upward strikes to denote forward movement of vehicles and repeated strokes for the sounds of trucks or motorcycles. He received no explicit instruction in this written device; he had picked this up from his exposure to children's books.[4]

Conclusions

What is there to learn about the extraordinary power of "acting meaning" that children's literature offers from the cases of Charlene and De? Certainly, in comparison with the exposure of Lindsey and Ashley to children's literature, Charlene and De had fewer books and less time for mother and child to read together. However, their interactions with books launched De into a sense of himself as reader and writer. Between the ages of two and three, De began to create fictional stories of a state-event-state order, to fictionalize himself and others in events for which he provided comments on motive/cause, evaluation/reaction and real-world links. He added comments on the motivations and evaluations of actors that he included in his own accounts of real events. In his drawings, he focused not on discrete pieces or items, but instead on the picture as representative of a whole story and of portions of the drawing as representing actions. By the time he was three years of age, De had acquired the following behaviors related to reading and talking about reading:

1. Producing spontaneous frames for opening conversations about books or real-word events ("This is a book about trains." "Did you see it's raining out there?")
2. Voluntarily counting objects in books and naming their colors.
3. Voluntarily reading books to himself and Tutti.
4. Sustaining the topic of narratives he created, even when adults tried to divert him from the telling by asking questions.
5. Inferring causal links and internal states of both book characters and real-world animates about whom he created narratives.
6. Fictionalizing himself as a reader and writer in a future scene (school); explaining his current actions as "reading" and "writing."
7. Issuing imperatives to other preschoolers about "taking care of books."
8. Engaging in forecasting events to come, based on limited experiences with those events; laying out steps to be followed in a car trip, preparation of cards for a game, and so on.

When De began Head Start at the age of three, his teachers told Charlene he was "too fast" and wanted "to talk too much." A shift of teachers several months into the year brought De more

acceptance, and by January of 1984, he was the star performer of the class. He was able to count to ten, label colors, recognize his name in print, and answer questions such as "What does your Aunt Mimi's name start with?" He voluntarily gave Charlene accounts of his day at school, and he read to Tutti as well as with both his mother and father. Though not without mishap, his elementary years progressed smoothly, and Charlene's role in recording and discussing his early experiences with reading helped prepare her to negotiate with the school for optimal opportunities for De and her other children.

These two radically different case studies--of Lindsey and of De--illustrate the need for a radically expanded perception of reading and of the role of children's literature than that which currently dominates educational philosophy. Most current work on reading focuses on children's preparation for reading--emergent literacy, reading readiness, etc.--or on the actual episode of adult and child around a text in which both try to make meaning of the text.

The cases given here illustrate how extensive and enveloping the reading of children's literature is: how the act of reading differs from the experience of reading. Reading is seen as gradually achieved apperception rather than immediate perception. Open-ended opportunities for interpretation and response help ensure the spreading and reshaping of reading through time. Children's literature enables these extensions, in large part because of the powers of its literary language to give forth different meanings under various circumstances. With new plays of memory, literary language can be reshaped by encounters in conversation, with real-life stories, and in remakings with other readings of other books and even of the same book. The issue here is the experience of reading children's literature and why and how the very literary experience facilitates cognitive and linguistic manipulations of materials, as well as interactions so fundamental as conversation, negotiations of social norms, and comparisons between one situation and the next.

What then about the answer to the question of whether there might be substitutes for children's literature? Are we saying by pointing out the merits of reading children's literature that those children who do not have the experiences described here are condemned to be deficient in cognitive, linguistic, and social skills? No. But we are calling attention through very close linguistic and anthropological studies <u>over time</u> to what happens to children's literature in the heads of young children. The repeated, predictable occasions of reading, along with the open-ended conversational occasions where neither adult nor child can hold absolute answers over what either word or illustration of text means, foster play with rules. These spreading cognitive and linguistic ramblings find their way into critical tests that children themselves conduct on the world around them as well as on other texts. It is precisely because the literary experience offers no closed answers, no fixed actions, and no absolutes that children can step into the voids of children's literature and become dramatic interpreters, combatants, questioners, and story-extenders. In very few other areas of life for young children are these opportunities available.

But some such opportunities do exist. For example, in societies around the world where anthropologists have found extensive verbal teasing of young children, the same kind of social, linguistic, and cognitive play takes place. Through teasing, children are allowed to play multiple roles: they can be grandfather, frog, princess, rogue, bandit, witch, or baby. Through such occasions, they can explore and test, as well as critique, the rules that seem to be at work in the teasing. Moreover, when they have had enough of the teasing with their parents, they can announce the play is "off" and reshape life back into its normal rules. The same is true of reading children's literature or dramatizing its tales. Children enter into the realm of play, where the announcement of on/off has everything to do with what goes and what does not go on.

Possibilities of expansion and apperception also exist in those situations in which the culture encourages extensive dramatic role playing, usually in connection with music or storytelling across ages, religious festivals and multiple roles for community members. The essential component of such occasions, however, is that they cannot be purely ritualistic, where no one questions, debates, reinterprets, or redramatizes. The openness of the forms, and their ability to allow children, as well as adults, to admit their own inadequacies in knowing all, provide the essential context for the development of the types of social, cognitive, and linguistic displays offered in the cases given here. With the help of children and adults in these cases, we have not only gained a sense of entering Cinderella's carriage, we have also gathered on our journey some sense of the paths and highways all children who can enter the world of story--one way or another--may take as they act and re-enact meaning.

Endnotes

1. This paper is drawn in part from Wolf and Heath (forthcoming), a full account of the creative, critical responses of two young children to the children's literature they had read to them over nine years. This work is based on the premises of a sociocultural approach to reading as mediated action. For further development of this method of studying mind, self, and emotion, see Wertsch (1991, especially chapter 2).

2. The Thomas case is reported more fully in Heath and Branscombe (1985), Heath, Branscombe, and Thomas (1986), and Heath and Thomas (1984).

3. Charlene is a speaker of Black Vernacular English, who shifts toward some standard English features in some styles and uses of speech. No attempt is made here to represent the exact sounds of her speech, and the modified spellings are used only to represent the natural flow of her speech and that of De and in full awareness that all natural English speech differs from what the standard orthography seems to indicate.

4. E. Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982), as well as other who have studied children's art (Lindstrom, 1970, Goodnow, 1977; Goodnow, Wilkins, and Dawes, 1986; Soderbergh, 1988) illustrate the numerous cases in which children extract segmented pieces of text that carry narrative meanings as well as abstract representations of concrete phenomena and incorprate these into their own drawings.

References

Ahlberg, J. and Ahlberg, A. (1986). The Jolly Postman or Other People 's Letters. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Bateson, G. (1955). A theory of play and fantasy. Psychiatric Research Reports, 2, 39-51.

Bruner, J. (1986). Actual Minds, Possible Worlds. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ferreiro, E. and Teberosky, A. (1982). Literacy before Schooling. Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

Goodnow, J.J. (1977). Children Drawing. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Goodnow, J.J., Wilkins, P., and Dawes, L. (1986). Acquiring cultural forms: Cognitive aspects of socialization illustrated by children's drawings and judgments of drawing. International Journal of Behavioral Development, 9, 485-505.

Heath, S.B. and Branscombe, A. (1985). Intelligent writing in an audience community: Teacher, students, and researcher. The Acquisition of Written Language: Revision and Response. S.W. Freedman, ed. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Co. pp. 3-32.

Heath, S.B., Branscombe, A. and Thomas, C. (1986). The book as narrative prop in language acquisition. The Acquisition of Literacy: Ethnographic Perspectives. B. Schieffelin and P. Gilmore, eds. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing. pp. 16-34.

Heath, S.B. and Thomas, C. (1984). The achievement of preschool literacy for mother and child. Awakening to Literacy. H. Goelman, A. Oberg, F. Smith, eds. Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books. pp. 51-72.

Lindstrom, M. (1970). Children's Art. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Soderbergh, R. (1988). A 5-12 year-old reader's book illustrating drawing: Transformation into the pictorial mode and a window towards an inner world of language. Early Reading and Writing. [Paper No. 3] Lund, Sweden: Child Language Research Institute. pp. 33-56.

Steptoe, J. (1987). Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters, An African Tale. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). Mind in Society. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wertsch, J. (1991). Voices of the Mind. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wolf, S.A. and Heath, S.B. (1992). The Braid of Literature: Children's World of Reading. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Remembering Pennsylvania

Lois Lowry

A long time ago - it was around 1945 - a little girl took her baby brother for a walk in his stroller, down the sidewalk of the little town in Pennsylvania where her family lived. He was two and she was eight; and they were both the kind of blonde, blue-eyed children that you used to see in the old Dick-and-Jane books.

There was only one unusual characteristic to this little girl, and it was something that was not visible on the surface. It was that she was the kind of child who lived her life on two levels: one, the actual living, and two, the narration that she did constantly in her head. She told her own story to herself, from the moment that she woke each morning in the bedroom that she shared with her sister, and upon waking thought, "The little girl woke up and noticed that her sister was still asleep in the other bed. She could smell bacon frying in the kitchen. She wondered what sort of day it would be..." until at night she turned out the light beside her bed and thought, before she slept, "Her pink flannel pajamas felt very cozy. Through the window she could see the street light on the corner. From downstairs she heard a murmur of voices: her mother and sister, talking. It wasn't **fair** that her sister got to stay up later just because she was three years older..."

And so, because she was that sort of child, the little girl, as she pushed her brother's stroller, was also telling the story of herself pushing the stroller. She romanticized it a little. She added adjectives. "The **pretty** little girl..." she told herself.

She created tension, and pathos. "The pretty little girl, forced to care for her small brother even though she was no more than a child herself..."

Psychiatrists listening to this description may fidget a little uneasily and reach for their prescription pads. Hmmm: a child who dissociates. And certainly there's a narcissistic element there.

But what I'm describing is simply a child who is keenly observant, occasionally bored, passionately imaginative, and in all likelihood will grow up to be a writer.

As for the memory of myself pushing my brother in his wicker stroller: why does that memory float up into my consciousness more often, and with more clarity, than memories of Brownie meetings or Sunday dinners at Grandmother's house?

Because my brother Jonny, like all inquisitive toddlers, was into everything, including - to my frustration, at eight - my private things. That morning I had found him at my desk, pulling open the drawers in which I kept my most treasured collections of papers and pencils and crayons and paper clips - what I called my "office stuff" - the things with which I spent hours pretending to be a teacher, or librarian. **The little girl's important stuff was all messed up by the brat**

brother.

In retaliation, I had opened the tube of Duco cement which had been in one of the drawers, and speared the clear cement on the back of Jonny's hand. It dried instantly, of course, into a wrinkled shiny crust. He was quite fascinated by it - as was I - but he wouldn't stand still long enough for me to peel the dried cement off of his skin.

So later that day, when I took him for his afternoon walk in the stroller, his little hand was still covered with that odd shiny coating.

As we walked down the street, me bumping the stroller along the brick sidewalk near the college, two elderly ladies came from the opposite direction. I could see their faces light up at the sight of a little girl walking her baby brother. They smiled, and stopped, as they reached me. They murmured some social niceties. Isn't it a pretty afternoon, and aren't you a nice little girl, to be taking your baby brother for a walk. What a helper you are to your mother.

Yes, I responded. It is. I am. I had, in fact, been telling myself that very same story, in my inner narration as I walked: "The little girl was a good helper to her mother. She was taking her baby brother for a walk..."

But suddenly one of the women leaned over and peered intently at my brother. She picked up his arm, in its blue corduroy jacket sleeve, very carefully. "Oh, my goodness," she said, in a hushed voice. She was looking at his hand, the same hand on which I had smeared a glob of glue that morning.

Her voice was suddenly filled with compassion and concern. "He's been badly burned, hasn't he?" she said to me.

I was ordinarily a fairly honest child. And I knew what I **should** reply, "No, that's just glue."

But I didn't. Instead I nodded my head sadly, because her mistake had in an instant caused me to re-write my narrative. Now it went like this: "The little girl was taking her **badly burned** brother for a walk..."

And it was more interesting.

It made you want to turn the page to see what happened next.

I want to talk about remembering.

I want to pronounce that re-membering, as if it is the opposite of dis-membering.

Putting parts back together. It is what I do, when I sit at my desk each day, looking back, seeing bits and pieces and tatters from the past. I try to put them together. I try to remember.

It's something like looking at a road map, after the trip has ended, in order to see where, exactly, you have been.

In re-membering that little incident, the child taking her brother for a walk, the child lying

about her brother, I can see exactly, now, where I was on that particular journey.

I was learning how to be a writer. I was learning how to manipulate the small details of day-to-day events, how to reshape them into something of substance, of meaning, of interest.

The Irish writer Edna O'Brien once said (of herself, and all writers), "The time when you are most alive and most aware is in childhood; and one is trying to recapture that heightened awareness."

My books are not, on the whole, set in Pennsylvania. Only one, a book called Autumn Street, is specifically located in that little town - its name was Carlisle - where I grew up and where I went through the formative years of elementary school.

But all the rest of them, whether they are set in Boston, where I live now; or New York, where I lived years ago; or Des Moines, where I have never set foot; or Copenhagen, which I have only visited - all of them draw on that same landscape: the landscape of childhood emotions and awareness.

When I was ten, and at a summer camp in the Poconos, I had a crush on a counselor. Her name, I remember was Jeanne. I made a stuffed animal in Crafts and embroidered her name on its side, and very shyly made a gift of it to her.

I look back now and envision her with her fellow counselors. In my imagination I can see them pausing in the midst of their after-the-campers-are-finally-asleep socializing, their cigarettes and beer with the guys who were working at the boys' camp across the lake. I picture them chuckling over that misshapen stuffed dog I made, and its uneven embroidery of her name, which I may even have misspelled.

What I remember, though, is how kind she was to me, and how honored she appeared to be by that gift.

I used that experience - and my feelings about that summer - when I gave Anastasia a crush on her seventh grade gym teacher.

And I not only remebered it; I re-membered it as well. I changed its parts, the same way I changed a glob of glue into a burn, and then I put its parts into an order that would tell a story, would advance a story already being told, and would give something of value to the child who reads it.

> "Yeah." Anastasia felt very shy, even in front of her own mother, who had known her ever since she was born. She wanted to tell her about something, but she felt too shy.
>
> Suddenly she decided that maybe the dishes in the pantry needed rearranging, so she went to the pantry and began to move them around. She moved the cups from one shelf to another; then she unstacked the plates and restacked them in a different place.

"Mom," she called, from the pantry, "I know this girl at school, and guess what? This is really weird-"

"What? I can't hear you. Why are you clanking all the dishes?"

Anastasia leaned around the doorway. "I know this girl at school," she said. "She's just my age, thirteen?"

"Yes? What about her? Is it someone I know?"

Anastasia's head disappeared. "No," she called. "You don't know her. You never met her. You don't even know her name." Quickly she moved two plates off their stack and put a soup bowl in their place.

"Oh. Well, what about her? Did you want to tell me something about her?"

Anastasia poked her head out again. "It's really **sick**. This girl, who you don't even know her name? She, ah, she has a crush on a teacher." She ducked back into the pantry and rearranged a sugar bowl and a tea cup.

"Why is that sick? Lots of your father's students have crushes on him. I think that's fairly typical."

"It's a **woman** teacher!" Anastasia wailed. "Isn't that **gross?**"

"Oh," Mrs Krupnik said. "I see." She got up from the table and came to the pantry. Anastasia was standing with her back turned and her head down, but she could hear her mother coming. Her mother put her arms around her.

"It isn't gross at all," she said softly. "You can tell your friend that it isn't gross at all. And I'm an authority on that."

"You are?" Anastasia lifted her head a little. "How come?"

"Well, because when I was your age - and the age of this girl you know - thirteen, I had a crush on my piano teacher. A woman. Miss Hermione Fitzpatrick."

"**Hermione?**"

"Sorry about the name. But I adored her despite it. She was young and she was beautiful and she was a good musician, and - well, what can I say? I loved her. I even had fantasies about living with her after I grew up."

"What happened?"

Her mother shrugged. "Nothing. I got older. I got bored with piano lessons. Hermione Fitzpatrick married an oboe player. I haven't even thought of her for years and years."

"So it didn't have any long-lasting effect on you, or anything?"

"Anastasia," her mother said dramatically, "take a look at me." she walked across the kitchen, stood in the center, and posed there like a model. "Did I turn out okay, or not?"

Anastasia looked. Her mother was wearing jeans with paint smeared on one knee. There were sneakers on her feet, and one yellow sock and one white sock. She was wearing a sweat shirt that said GOD ISN'T DEAD, SHE'S COOKING DINNER across the front. Her hair was tied up in two ponytails, one on each side of her head, both of them a little crooked.

"Yeah," Anastasia conceded. "You turned out okay."

"So. There's your answer."

"So you think that this girl I know, she might get over it? And it doesn't mean that she's weird or anything?" Anastasia came out of the pantry.

"She's not weird at all. What it **does** mean is that she's very normal, very sensitive, very capable of loving. I think I would probably like her a whole lot."

"If you knew her," Anastasia said quickly.

"Yes, of course. If I knew her."

As a gift to **me** come the letters from children who are touched in some way by something I've written. Here is an excerpt from a letter from a twelve-year-old named Lauren:

After reading Anastasia Has the Answers I experienced a feeling of relief. When you described Anastasia's crush on her teacher I was totally amazed at how you can touch my heart like that. ...I'm glad that Anastasia and I shared something in common. I never could tell anyone about that "crush" before, because I was embarrassed. But you've shown me that there is no reason to be. Thank you very much.

When I talk about "re-membering" there is the implication that by going back, by arranging the parts of a memory into a usable, meaningful pattern, I can rewrite history, make things turn out okay, or better, perhaps than they really had. That is not so. When I was young, my older sister died of cancer. Remembering that, and writing the remembering, as I did in A Summer to Die, doesn't change the fact that it happened. When I was a child in Pennsylvania, the grandchild of my grandparents' cook - a black child (whose real name was Gloria; I made her a boy, and named him Charles, when I wrote of it) - was my friend, and was later murdered. Remembering and writing of that in the book Autumn Street didn't change any of those events at all.

But some years ago, in a book called Us and Uncle Fraud, I used this sentence in one of the concluding chapters: We had changed in our knowledge of things.

And that is really the magic that happens in writing out of memories, out of one's childhood awareness. In looking back at the life and death of my sister - and its place in the fabric of my life - I changed in my knowledge of things.

In looking back - in fitting into my own history - the murder of a childhood friend, I changed in my knowledge of things.

The same is true in remembering a crush on a camp counselor, anger at a parent, betrayal by a friend, humiliation by a teacher, jealousy of a sibling: all of those things part of my own past, along with the many joys.

I haven't talked about Number the Stars, which is set so far from Pennsylvania and which uses a friend's childhood memories instead of my own. But the emotions in that book are universal ones, ones that today's children understand: fear, loyalty, pride, and more. The letters I'm receiving now from kids are among the most gratifying I'm ever likely to receive, because what they tell me is this: that in reading that book which remembers that past (a past - and a place - which at first seems so distant to them) they enter that magic realm which a book can provide for both writer and reader. It becomes real. It becomes a place they can go to. It is a dangerous place, and they enter it with fear; but they emerge from it with honor.

And they return changed in their knowledge of things.

Families and Literacy: Building Social and Cultural Continuity

Vivian L. Gadsden
University of Pennsylvania

Within the past ten years, there has been renewed interest in the role of the family in literacy development, specifically the impact of literacy instruction for parents and children (e.g., Edwards, 1989; Taylor & Strickland, 1989). Generally subsumed under the label, "family literacy," much of the work has focused on the family as a recipient of instruction rather than as a means to understanding instructional needs and developing appropriate instructional approaches. As Nickse (1989) points out, however, family literacy is a variable concept, at best, defined and shaped significantly by policy agendas, economic exigencies, and apparent educational urgency.

This paper focuses on the family literacy effort as a way to build social and cultural continuity between home and school (literacy program) contexts. The discussion: (1) describes the multiple connotations, images, and meanings associated with the concept of family literacy; (2) focuses on the role of families as educational resources; and (3) provides a backdrop to establishing a literacy community for educators and family members.

Unpacking the Concept of Family Literacy

Despite the growing interest in the concept of family literacy, we know relatively little about the constituent components of family literacy constructs, programs, or designs, although several good programs have been developed. No theoretical framework for family literacy exists; however, programs may be based around a core of accepted beliefs and premises about the social nature of literacy learning. Programs are designed for targeted populations which are generally described as adults who have been labeled, "at-risk;" adults who are educationally disadvantaged; newly literate adults; adult literacy students; teen parents in welfare families; mothers in prison; and parents of children in federally funded educational programs such as Head Start and Chapter 1 (Nickse, 1989).

Literacy programs serving families range from parent involvement projects to parent-child book reading programs. Programs may be defined more broadly as intergenerational or multigenerational and include only a limited literacy strand. They may include adults and children in one family or simply pair one child in a family with an adult outside the family who volunteers to assist the child by tutoring, book reading, or mentoring. Programs may be culturally focused (e.g., a Chicago program using an Afrocentric approach and a Los Angeles program designed to meet the needs of Mexican-American families), or they may be generic in their programmatic appeal. They may respond to the goals of a small community network, or they may be appended to existing adult literacy programs. They sometimes use a panoply of approaches, or they may be built around a single philosophy or strategy. Programs may involve a parent and child from the same

family or may include a child and an adult family member other than the parent, e.g., grandparent, uncle, or aunt. Rarely, however, do programs expand to include more than two members within a single family (typically a parent and child) around a set of teaching and learning approaches.

The characteristics of family literacy programs are representative of the broad conceptualizations of family literacy in research, program, and policy discussions. As the descriptions demonstrate, the characteristics assigned to family literacy often contrast, providing multiple--and sometimes confusing--images of what the definitions and parameters of family literacy programs are. These images call into question the monolithic use and application of the concept, family literacy. What is needed are some guiding principles and understandings about how families, with different cultural histories and experiences, use literacy to make sense of the world and how literacy assistance can most effectively help them to do so.

Approaches to involving families and improving the literacy abilities of parents, children, and other family members in schools and literacy programs can be seen as opportunities for practitioners to expand their own practice. To build social and cultural continuity between home and school is to assume that an educational segue exists through which we can enter into a relationship with parents concerning their own literacy needs and those of their children and other family members. This segue allows us, as educators, to identify and build on: (1) the social and cultural realities within families, despite initial unfamiliarity with the family's culture or possible opposition to the family's beliefs and practices; (2) the strength of the family itself as an evolutionary unit; and (3) the value of the family and community in making literacy assistance accessible to individuals for whom it may not be available. Our alternative, it seems, is to continue with unsuccessful strategies aimed at reshaping families in our own images, to make them meet an unagreed upon standard of behavior and use for literacy, or to persist with approaches and materials that may be only minimally valued, marginally interesting, and resulting in disengagement of the family learners whose participation we most want to sustain.

Families; Purveyors of Discontinuity or Sources of Continuity for Literacy Learning?

Considerable attention over the past 25 years has been given to the studies of family and school as educational institutions. Much of the work in the 1960's was in response to the educational opportunity initiatives that focused on children from African-American families or from low-income homes. In describing the role of parents and families, particularly families for whom the federal initiatives were intended, many of these studies emphasized what researchers labeled "discontinuity within families"--i.e., family-specific characteristics that created problems for children attempting to make the transition from home to school (Gadsden, 1990; Hess & Holloway, 1984; Laosa, 1982).

Since the 1960's research has continued to highlight the importance of parent participation in children's early literacy experiences, particularly the development of positive connections between literate events at home and at school (Epstein, 1987; Slaughter, 1987). Often, however, remedies for the literacy problems and needs facing families are developed and implemented with only limited acknowledgement of the different roles of family members in influencing the decisions and motivation of the literacy learner--child or adult. What neither research nor practice has addressed effectively, despite enormous effort, is how to broaden the role of educators and educational institutions and assume a proactive relationship with parents that promotes the school achievement of their children, helps them develop their own literate abilities, and sustains communication about literacy goals and needs.

How do we know what parents want for themselves and for their children or what investments are they willing to make? What divestments are we willing to make as educators, and how does what we do help family members and children achieve their life goals and needs? At the heart of these questions lie two premises which guide much of the work that is currently done in studies on families and literacy. One premise sees literacy as performing school-like literacy activities within family contexts. The approach focuses on teaching parents strategies and approaches to assist their children, using school-like models (Auerbach, 1989).

A second premise focuses on the family as a source of information and literacy learning. The acquisition of literacy skills is seen in relation to its contexts and uses (Heath, 1983; Street, 1987); family practices and interactions are examined to understand the functions, uses, and purposes of literacy within families. This view presupposes that the family is a context for learning and that program development and relationships between teachers and students should build on the social fabric of the family unit.

While these premises are bifurcated persistently in the research literature, the dichotomy has become less stark as we come to learn more about families, cultural issues, and social contexts for literacy learning. The reality is that (1) many parents may want to use school-like models in assisting their children (Edwards, in press) and (2) it is not only possible but also essential to use the knowledge of parents and other family members to develop instruction and to integrate their interests, prior knowledge, and experiences into the curriculum. The demarcation between these two premises may not be entirely false, however, when considering expected outcomes. Just as models based on the first premise hold promise for improving the literate abilities of parents and children, models based on the second will help us better understand the family as a source and user of knowledge. What the first may provide us in measurable terms (e.g., test score gains) over the short or long term, the second may allow us to sustain in program participation by children, parents, and other community members.

If we look at literacy as school-like practices only, we ignore any possibility of creating

opportunities to work with parents, understanding the social and cultural features of the family, and reconciling the interplay between contextual strengths and constraints and family members' beliefs about what literacy means, how it can best be achieved, and how it can be used most effectively within their daily lives. It, therefore, would be a much better use of resources and energy to identify ways to acquire information about the social and cultural experiences of family learners so that mutual exchange of such information becomes a natural venue to building literacy continuity around families' cultural meanings and values within school and other learning contexts.

Establishing Continuity and Program Development

As noted earlier, efforts on behalf of families often portray the problems of literacy education as discontinuity in values, attitudes, and learning behaviors between the family and school environments; this discontinuity can result from mismatch of goals or from misunderstanding. Several researchers (e.g., Hess and Holloway, 1984) have noted the mismatch between family and school. This mismatch or problems between families and schools may be obvious in the level of independence and participation that learners demonstrate in the classroom (Epstein, 1982); in learners' cultures, expectations, and prior modes of communicating ideas and responding to teachers (Au, 1980); in the inconsistency between learners' expectations of the teacher as authority and the teachers' acknowledgement of his or her authority (Foster 1990); or the differences and continuities between the language experiences of children in families and the culture of school (Heath, 1983). These studies suggest that discontinuities may result not simply from a mismatch between the goals of families and of schools but also from misunderstandings about the nature of individual and families' expectations of literacy instruction and learning. These misunderstandings often thwart attempts to ensure continuity for children and adult learners; however, their impact may be reduced when educators invest in learning about the home and community contexts in which children and their families live.

Unlike parent education programs intended to help parents function more effectively as parents, family literacy programs--based on a broad set of assumptions--are built on the notion that the family is an educative community in which shared learning experiences occur. A recurrent theme in much of the family support literature (e.g., Krysan, 1990), but often absent in the family literacy literature, is the emphasis on identifying and using what is referred to as "family strengths," that is, building on a competencies model in families. While these strengths have rarely been delineated clearly, social connectedness of the family to others in the community is a frequently identified variable in successful family support programs.

Basic to providing literacy assistance to parents, children, or families is recognizing that family needs, beliefs, and cultural and community traditions are interwoven in the purposes for learning literacy and willingness to participate in new literacy learning experiences. Despite good will in seeking such information, it is sometimes difficult to obtain. Information about and from

parents, children, and other family members may not be readily accessible. Obtaining the information requires commitment, at the point of conceptualization and program planning, to developing a culturally appropriate and educationally sound model informed by the experiences and knowledge of the families the program is intended to serve. In developing and preparing to implement a literacy resource program for African-American and Latino-American parents and children, our research team at the University of Pennsylvania has focused on two questions: (1) what do we need to know in order to make this program effective for the participants and for ourselves? and (2) how can we identify characteristics and needs of family members around literacy? The following discussion describes how we attempted to respond to these two questions.

In responding to the first question, we acknowledged what we considered a reality of any attempt to ensure continuity: 1) there is no "grab-bag" of approaches that works for all learners and all families all of the time and 2) sub-cultures exist within cultural groups, and individuals within a cultural group often differ dramatically in the purposes and goals for literacy learning. Building continuity between the social and cultural contexts of literacy learning within families and the activities within literacy programs requires knowledge of the community in which the families live and work, their literacy experiences and abilities, and their culture.

In responding to the second question, we found several approaches that work and six that were fundamental to engaging parents and families. We decided to:

1. Think of family members (parents and children specifically) as the primary source of information about their culture and social assets with a sense of the strengths and limitations of their literacy abilities. As a source of information, the family can assist educators in identifying their literacy needs and the contributions of the home as a social context for learning.
2. Plan meetings with parents and children and use these meetings as opportunities to learn about the community, the parents, the family, and the culture. Reality dictated that we be willing to accept the fact that not all parents would be responsive. While we held out hope that all parents would participate, we began by engaging those parents who were interested and willing to participate in the family literacy effort.
3. Read about the culture and community and engage parents and children in non-threatening discussions, acknowledging what we need to know; listen to parents and children talk about their interests (and hear them), in order to integrate their interests into the program. We began by being honest with ourselves and the families about the limitations of our knowledge about the culture and being realistic about our collective and individual ability or desire to learn more about the community.
4. Begin building cultural continuity through literature, using books and other instructional materials and approaches that are representative and sensitive to the cultural histories of the parents, children, and families. For example, we used books from three strands: (1) traditional

children's books/classics (e.g., The Little Engine that Could), (2) books about diverse cultural groups other than those of the program participants (e.g., Ka-ha-si and the Loon: An Eskimo Legend), and (3) books about and by people from the same culture as the program participants (e.g., Teo en el Circo and The Village of Round and Square Houses). Parents and children selected the books they felt were most appropriate and appealing.

5. Create opportunities to learn about existing practices in the home to help learners expand their knowledge of specific subject areas; share information about the purposes for literacy activities and the literacy experiences of the teaching/program staff.

6. Identify the most valued practices, beliefs, and traditions around literacy; involve parents and children in crafting activities for the program agenda.

Conclusion

For the past year, our research team has been studying the community described in the previous section and a second community of learners in a Southern, rural community. What has been especially striking, in particular for us is the high level of similarity between the comments of the parents and family members in the two communities--one in the Southeast and one in the Northeast, one with adults 70 and older and one with young mothers, and one consisting of African-American families only and the other with large numbers of Puerto Rican families. While each community has focused on its own social and cultural needs for adults and children, the comments of the adults in both sites are remarkably similar. Consider, for example, the common thread in the quotations from a conversation with a young, Puerto Rican mother:

> Our children learn a lot here in this program, but when they go to kindergarten, they don't want to be Spanish anymore. I want my son to learn English so he can be successful in life, but I want him to know he's Spanish. I want to talk to the teacher and tell her what I think, but I don't know...I don't feel comfortable...I want to learn things for myself.

or the comments of a 76 year-old great-grandmother, remembering her expectations for her children around literacy:

> I just wanted my children to learn. When I sent them to school, I wanted them to be able to read the books. I used to see them read, and I bought them books - religious stories...I felt I had to speak well to ask the teacher and principal the right questions.

These comments suggested that literacy not only has cultural and community-specific meanings but is also considered the means to success. Parents in particular have clear notions about what constitutes literacy, what they want to learn, what they want their children to be able to achieve, and what level of sacrifice they are willing to make (Taylor & Strickland, 1989; Washington, 1989). They seek help from us as educators to help them coordinate the effort and

often lack the literate ability and confidence to express their needs and aspirations in the ways that are most comfortable, pleasing, or familiar to us. Social and cultural contexts are critical to understanding the lives that families lead and the relationship between these lives and the desire for literacy and persistence to improve literacy.

The ideas in this paper are based on two assumptions: (1) that families and schools are both educational institutions that contribute sometimes equally to the literacy socialization of the child, and (2) apparent discontinuities between family and schools can be realistically reduced so that reciprocal learning and teaching occurs between the family and schools around literacy. Most importantly, however, is the common sense--or as Mayher (1990) states, the "uncommon sense"--that suggests that (1) we as educators have an opportunity to define and formulate this area of research and practice in a way that will promote the development of family learning over years to come, and (2) that the imperative is here for educators to help children and their families reconcile the ostensible access to literacy and subtle barriers to achieving it. If reading is, in fact, the activity that we want to promote, we might aim to do so by understanding family interest and engaging the children and parents of families in rich literature about their own cultures and a variety of other cultures. We have in our power, as educators, the opportunity to put into practice what many of us espouse--that is, literacy is an interactive and social process requiring an integration of students' prior knowledge and experiences. By working toward social and cultural continuity for children and parents learning literacy, we create the capacity for literacy programs and schools to engage young learners and re-engage older learners and to assist them in controlling their own literate destinies.

References

Au, K. (1980). Participation structures in a reading lesson with Hawaiian children. Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 11, 91-115.

Auerbach, E.R. (1989). Toward a social-contextual approach to family literacy. Harvard Educational Review, 59, 165-187.

Edwards, P. (1989). Supporting lower SES mothers' attempts to provide scaffolding for book reading. In Allen, J.B. & Mason, J.M. (Eds.), Risk Makers, Risk Takers, Risk Breakers. Portsmouth, NH; Heinmann Educational Books, 222-251.

Epstein, J.L. (1983). Longitudinal effects of family-school-person interactions on students outcomes. Research in Sociology of Education and Socialization, 4, 101-127.

Epstein, J.L. (1987). Toward a theory of family - School Connections: Teacher Practices and Parent Involvement. Social Intervention: Potential and Constraints, K. Hurrelmann, F. Kaufmann, and F. Losel (Eds.). New York/Berlin, DeGruyter, 121-136.

Foster, M. (in press). The Politics of Race: Through the Eyes of African-American Teachers. Journal of Education.

Gadsden, V.L. (1990). Minority access to literacy: An American case study. Psychology and Developing Societies, 2, 17-29.

Heath, S.B. (1983). Ways with Words. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hess R.D., & Holloway, S.D. (1984). Family and school as educational institutions, In R.D. Parke (Ed.), Review of Child Development Research: the Family, 77. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 179-222.

Laosa, L.M. (1982) School, occupation, culture, and family: The impact of parental schooling on the parent-child relationships. Journal of Educational Psychology, 74, 791-827.

Mayher, J.S. (1990). Toward uncommon sense literacy learning: Integrating reading and writing. Literacy instruction: Practice, problems, promises. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh.

McGillicuddy-De lisi. A.V. (1985). The Relationship Between Parental Beliefs and Children's Cognitive Level. Parental Belief Systems: The Psychological Consequences of Children. Sigel, I.E. (Ed.) Hillsdale, NJ; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 7-24.

Nickse, R.S. (1989). The noises of literacy: An overview of intergenerational family literacy programs. Eric document reproduction number ED 308 415.

Slaughter, D.T. (1987). The Home Environment and Academic Achievement of Black American Children and Youth: An Overview. Journal of Negro Education, 56, 3-20.

Street, B.V. (1987). Literacy and social change: the significance of social context in the development of literacy programs. In D.A. Wagner (Ed.), The Future of Literacy in a Changing World. London: Pergamon Press.

Taylor, D. & Strickland, D.S. (1989). Learning from families: Implications for Educators and Policy. In J. Allen & J.M. Mason (Eds.), Risk makers, Risk takers, Risk breakers: Reducing the risks for young literacy learners. Protsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Washington, V. (1989). Reducing risks to young black learners: An examination of race and educational policy. In J. Allen & J.M. Mason (Eds.), Risk makers, Risk takers, Risk breakers: Reducing the risks for young literacy learners. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The Secret of the Lifetime Reader

or

The Clue in the Classroom

Elizabeth Segel

Beginning With Books

In 1989 and 1990 Joan Friedberg and I gave week long summer workshops in the University of Pittsburgh's Institute for Practice and Research in Education on Using Literature in the Elementary Classroom. Last year on the last day of class, one first-grade teacher mused: "The children in my classroom always have learned to read. But until now, I never asked myself whether they **liked** to read." As a result of the workshop, she was adding that as an additional goal for her young students.

If children are going to develop the fluency, the effortless sailing through books that allows one to become transported, they must go beyond the initial triumph of learning to read. They have to read often enough and long enough to improve their skill and confidence. Now, anyone who doesn't **like** to read is not going to read that much. So one of the "clues" that helps us identify the child that goes on to be a lifelong reader is that she or he **likes** to read.

What makes a child like to read, and want to read every day? To come up with an answer to this question, I began thinking about myself as a child. I loved to read. Like a six-year-old I encountered recently, it was "my favorite thing". How did that happen?

Well, when I was very small, my parents read to me almost "on demand". One of my first memories is of waiting at the door with my fat Mother Goose book under my arm for my dad to arrive home after his day at the office. I remember ambushing him the minute he walked in, my mother murmuring in the background: "At least let the poor man take his coat off."

When I had learned to read, I was given the **chance** to read; the opportunity to "get lost in a book", which was my favorite state. Although my mother did frequently say with exasperation when I had chores to do: "Have you got your nose in a book again?" both my parents communicated to my three sisters and me that they were pleased we loved books. And they did let us read, pretty much to our hearts' content. Of course, in a little Massachusetts town in the 1940's, we didn't have the siren song of TV luring us from books, nor were we scheduled into activities to keep us busy. Summer days seemed to last for an eternity of boredom, unless one had a good book to curl up with in the hottest part of the day. And when we weren't reading, we neighborhood kids were often putting on elaborate theatrical versions of our favorite stories in an old cobwebby shed.

And my parents went on reading to us after we learned to read. Though they had their

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

own favorites (Dad was partial to Uncle Wiggly and the Thornton Burgess nature books), they read mostly what we chose: the dreadful Bobbsey Twins as well as the classic stories: Make Way for Ducklings, The Story of Ferdinand, and of course, the fairy tales. The latter were my mother's favorites, ever since she had found refuge in them when orphaned at the age of five. I even remember peeking guiltily into her old dog-eared unillustrated collection of the Grimm's tales to read with a shiver the gory part: Cinderella's sisters chopping off heel and toe to fit the slipper, and the little birds calling to the prince: "Look back, look back, there's blood on the track." (In our picture book version of the tale, Cinderella was pale, watered-down stuff next to that.)

We did not own many books. All our children's books fit into two shelves of a small bookcase between by sister's and my twin beds. But every week we went to the library and brought home books - old favorites and new discoveries. And no one ever told me - as far as I can remember - that a book was too old for me or too young for me, too hard or too easy. (The librarian **did** have a few books behind her desk that were considered too "racy" for young readers. I remember that at one time I vowed I would read Forever Amber as soon as I was a grown up, but alas, I forgot about it until this very moment). This free and unrestricted access to books was priceless. In many writers' autobiographies I recognize the same lucky chance that I experienced - the opportunity to range freely through a library, whether private or public. Here is Annie Dillard, in An American Childhood, her fascinating account of growing up in Pittsburgh, writing about the year she was ten and "began reading books, reading books to delirium...(80)" and ranging the shelves of the very library where the Beginning with Books office is today, looking for books that would "go off" like a bomb, a land mine (83). "This was the most private and obscure part of life, this Homewood library," she writes "...the stacks of which I plundered in deep concentration for many years. There seemed then, happily, to be an infinitude of books" (85).

Besides having the Chance to read, Lots of books available, and Unrestricted access to them, I had Encouragement. (Notice that the first letters of these conditions cleverly - or not so cleverly - spell CLUE!) But back to encouragement, probably the most important condition of all. My parents always bought me a very special book for my birthday and thoughtfully inscribed it. This ritual made me feel very special - a member of the "community of readers".

Now you will notice that these conditions that fostered my identity as a lifelong reader were provided largely by my home and my hometown library. Sad to say, school didn't have much to do with it, not until the high school years anyway. But schools and teachers **can** create these same conditions for today's children, the ones who are not as lucky as I was (and that includes lots of affluent as well as poor children). You can perhaps influence parents to create them at home, too.

A chance to read - at school, vow that kids in your classroom will be given time to really

read - to get lost in a book. And be an advocate for reading time at home. Many schools organize a "pull the plug" day, when every household is urged to turn off the TV and a program is held for family reading.

Lots of books - Be sure that your classroom is awash in books and that young readers have **unrestricted access to them. Never** put down a student's chosen book. If you don't have a permanent classroom library, ask parents to contribute a special book on a special occasion. Haunt your public library. Here in the city you can borrow books on a teacher card that allows you to take more books and keep them longer. Make it your business to stay up to date on what great new books are out there. Cultivate a children's librarian. Read the reviews. Treat yourself to regular browsing sessions in a good bookstore.

Figure out the best way for you to keep your own enthusiasm for books fresh by constantly discovering the exciting new books being published. Recommended is the 1991 winner of the American Library Association's Newbery Award. Jerry Spinelli's novels can treat upper elementary and middle school children to hilarity with a touching and thought-provoking side. If you have trouble getting your kids to sit still for read-aloud time, just start in with Maniac Magee, Spinelli's remarkable fictional history of a gutsy kid: "one part fact, two parts legend, and three parts snowball", as Spinelli puts it. You'll have them hook, line, and sinker simply by spinning out the jump-rope rhyme that precedes the story.

MA-niac, MA-niac
He's so COOL
MA-niac, MA-niac
Don't go to SCHOOL
Runs all NIGHT
Runs all RIGHT
MA-niac, MA-niac
Kissed a BULL!

Maniac Magee is a great book for introducing the subject of values to children. We all worry about the materialism and violence of our culture. They are so pervasive that even parents who try hard to set limits can feel defeated as the pop culture which saturates the airways seeps into their kids' consciousness. Good books can teach children a lot about kindness and tolerance, responsibility and the satisfactions of working hard. Books like Maniac Magee can be springboards for both young and old to examine the age-old questions: How do I want to live? What can I do to change things for the better?

If we really want kids to grow up to be readers, our job as adults is to put as many wonderful and exciting books in their path as possible and to **show** the kids how great they are. We do this not to put down kids' own choices, but to supplement them - and to make sure the child does not miss out on a book that she or he would love.

There is one other factor that may have played a part in my growing up a reader, and it

should be mentioned: I am female. I will never know if I would have ended up a lifelong reader if I had been born a boy. I probably would have. My father enjoyed reading and loved books, and so does my son. I bring this up, however, because for kids growing up in a home where there is not a male who loves books, gender apparently can greatly influence whether one becomes a proficient reader or not. And given the increase in peer pressure on boys today to be "macho", even having a male role model at home may not be enough.

This influence of gender on the making or breaking of readers seems to be due to socialization. In Israel and Germany where males are more involved in education, one does not see a disproportionate number of male children with reading problems. In our country, many have noticed that boys who enjoy books when they are small begin to lose interest in them or even avoid them when they reach about fourth grade. One mother of a child this age observed in his school that at library period, boys apparently chose books to borrow from the school library according to whether high status boys (i.e., athletes) had checked them out previously!

The teaching of young children and the study of reading and of children's literature have become identified with females. We have a classic vicious circle: these fields are in a sense left to women because they are considered trivial by our society; the field is then further devalued because it is woman-dominated. The subjects of the care and education of young children and the publishing and use of their books are considered trivial, of course, because we live in a society that devalues childhood and children. (There would be plenty of males involved in this conference if the subject was graduate education in literature.)

What can be done about this all-pervasive situation? First, we all need to tune in to the uses of literacy for boys in our society. Vivian Gadsden has shared with us the insight that families value literacy as a means of transmitting their culture. Well, the boys in our schools have a culture, as do girls (in addition to the culture they share). We need to find the books that represent and clarify that culture and promote them to our students. This does not mean that we should not find and promote books on the female experience as well, but we must recognize that, as females, we might overlook or fail to appreciate immediately the books that are rooted in male experience. Jerry Spinelli and Walter Dean Myers are two authors whose books successfully engage reluctant male readers, as do the remarkable videogame-based fantasies of an Australian female author, Gillian Rubenstein.

In addition, we can urge that the key professional organizations in the field - the International Reading Association, The American Library Association, and the National Council of Teachers of English - put a major effort into addressing this situation. On a personal level, we can all support efforts to improve the status of young children and of those who teach and care for them.

The Secret of the Life-Long Reader

or

The Clue in the Classroom

Margaret Mary Kimmel
University of Pittsburgh

To set a case for the concept of life-long reading, one must begin with more than scores on a standardized test. To read, one must believe that it is more than knowing how to read. The act of reading is a means to an end, not an end in itself. For children to become life-long readers, reading must become something that is important and satisfying. And this behavior must begin early.

Right now reading is a concern not only of parents and educators, but of our whole society. The business community sees it as vital to the skilled workforce that is needed today and will be even more essential in the technological, specialized economy to come. But more than economic concerns, we must be concerned about those who will be life long readers, because literature brings to our lives models of moral and ethical behavior. It allows us to see ourselves as others see us. I am reviewing a manuscript that begins:

> Children of privilege who attain the "trappings of success" still exhibit extraordinary self-centeredness. They do not have the perception that outside of themselves there is a world. Robert Coles points out that shared literature reverberates in our lives, acting as a stimulus for developing not only intellect, but character.

As educators, we believe in the power of metaphor. Language gives us a way of handling our more difficult moments or thoughts - consciously or unconsciously. In Paterson's The Great Gilly Hopkins, Gilly is a lonely, stubborn youngster who finds herself in a foster home with large but understanding Mame Trotter, whom Gilly is afraid to allow close. But like many other abandoned children, Gilly is convinced that being reunited with the mother who left her will solve all the problems. When the reunion is finally arranged, Gilly finds that she has become more involved with Mame and others in the house than she thought. With a gift of a book of poetry from the neighbor, she wonders about home.

> Gilly ran a finger over the wrinkled brown leather, which could almost have been a piece of Mr. Randolph, but the observation seemed too raw, so she kept it to herself.
> She waited for Trotter to puff up the stairs to take W.E. to bed before she began to look for the poem:
>
> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
> Hath elsewhere its setting
> And cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.

She didn't understand it any more than she had the first time. If birth was a sleep and a forgetting, what was death? But she really didn't care. It was the sounds she loved, the sounds that turned and fell in kaleidoscopic wonder.

"And not in utter nakedness." Who would have thought those five words could fall into such a pattern of light? And her favorite, "But trailing clouds of glory do we come." Was it all the l's that did it or the mental picture that streaked comet-like across the unfocused lens of her mind?

"From God, who is our home." Again the lens was unfocused. Was that God with the huge lap smelling of baby powder? Or was that home?

So, like Gilly we wonder about the way home. Where is it and who do we find when we get there? We and the children we read to wonder about our lives and the lives of others like us. In literature we find those things we share. We celebrate our unique contributions and discover mutual concerns. Recently, at a conference in Ohio, I sat with a teacher from East Cleveland. "It isn't God's garden," she told me. In her fourth grade classroom, however, she usually begins the year by reading the Odyssey. These children know the HARPIES - they see them on the way to and from school she claims. She continues with tales from the Iliad. Last year she read The Song of Roland. In East Cleveland, you say? "I tell them," she said to me, "these voices have lasted a thousand years. Will one of them be yours?" That is a powerful challenge and the children listen.

In discussing her research on the importance of stories in a child's life, Shirley Brice Heath has identified several factors that are significant in making the link for children in this act of reading. As she describes them, they are the:

1. Perception of self as reader and writer.
2. Perception of self in a conscious role as talker - ability to put oneself into story.
3. Ability to see self as creator of story so that the creation of stories is an extension of self.
4. Perception of self as elaborator of meaning.
5. Sense of self as source of new information - that story grows as we grow.

We have all been impressed and touched by those scholars whose research has defined and strengthened what we have personally experienced and intuitively made our life's work. The sharing of story, the personalizing of it, combined with the skills of decoding, form a package for life-long reading.

In my own life, I have observed it in both my professional and personal life. My nephew Matthew is a case in point. As he was growing up, I was always impressed by his sense of humor. He could recount the most absurd jokes or riddles, absolutely incomprehensible to anyone else, and infect the whole family with his abandoned laughter. I always sent books to his parents to read aloud, as well as some to Matthew himself. One year I sent his father Roald Dahl's The Fantastic Mr. Fox. The story is about three rude, crude farmers and a handsome, debonair fox-about-the-

farm. Every time the fox outwitted one of the farmers, the farmer would pound his fist and shout, "Dang and blast that filthy rotten fox!" And that was the way Matthew heard the story. So it happened that one day in kindergarten, Matthew and a friend got into an argument. His teacher said, "Now Matthew, you know that we don't play like that in this classroom. We have rules about how to conduct ourselves, don't we?" Matthew listened very patiently and then replied, "Dang and blast those filthy rotten rules!"

Later that afternoon I got a call from my sister who said, "Aunt Maggie, would you care to explain to the principal about how wonderful it is that Matthew has developed language acquisition skills?" Before long everyone was laughing, but that story has become a part of our lives. When we get together for family gatherings, it is rare that Matthew doesn't say, "Aunt Maggie, do you remember the time you sent that book to my dad? And I got in trouble with the principal?" That story is part of Matthew and no matter how much he reads, his life is connected in bits and pieces to story.

I have experienced it too. Introducing a speaker the other day, I quoted Matthew describing me to a friend:

> She was born.
> She went to school.
> She wrote some books - but I don't know who reads them.
> She isn't dead.
> But she's my Aunt Maggie.

That quote was slightly edited, because just before he said, "She's my Aunt Maggie," he said, "She walks funny, but she's my Aunt Maggie." I don't often talk about my disability, and I do so now with a sense of some unease. But I think it is an important point. Heath talked about "empowerment" - the ability to take story and make more of it. For a child with a disability, it is a widely held view that reading becomes a means of escape. For me, it was not escape. I remember the act of reading as a sense of freedom -- freedom that in a physical sense I found rarely. It provided me with a sense of independence that was fostered by my parents and all those around me. One of my earliest memories of falling was shortly after I returned from a hospital stay because I wasn't quite sure of whether the braces went before or after the crutches. My dad came over and sat down beside me on the floor. "Are you hurt?" Pop said. I was a bit startled because I had been prepared to wail. (I am still not adverse to taking center stage now and then.) I shook my head - no, I wasn't hurt. He patted my hand and wiped away a tear. "Now then," he said, "get up." And so it began.

When I was in fourth grade, a teacher gave me a copy of Caddie Woodlawn. In six months of reading it had been read to tatters. It gave me a sense that to be different was alright. It was a memorable experience and one that has come back to me at various times since then. The power that stories can give us is what our children are starving for. We can't provide food for their

bellies, but we can provide food for their brains. In fact, it is our job to do just that. And it is a gift that lasts a lifetime.

My mother has Alzheimer's, but she is living in a community where she is happy and safe. I have had some wonderful afternoons with her, going over old books that I found in one of those boxes that multiply in the basement when you turn the light out. Anyway, in one of those boxes, I found another relic from my childhood, Robert Louis Stevenson's A Child's Garden of Verse. We went through it, taking turns reading one poem after another, but when we came to the one that begins, "I have a little shadow," she stopped me. "I remember when you were three, you had a pretty pink dress. You could recite that poem from beginning to end." And we went on for almost an hour, and she brought up things I had long ago mercifully forgotten.

It isn't always easy, however, for my brothers and sisters who don't see her as often as I do. At a recent reunion, she asked me about "the man in the red shirt." My brother Mike was devastated. But when we put his three little girls to bed that night, she recited, word for word, his favorite story, The Pokey Little Puppy. So what if she can't remember names? Sometimes, I can't either. But her sense of self is strong and bound up in those story memories. It is a gift we have to share, and it is a gift that lasts a lifetime.

References

Brink, Caroline Rye (1935). Caddie Woodlawn. Illustrated by Kate Seredy. New York: MacMillan.

Lowery, Janette Sebring (1942). The Pokey Little Puppy. Illustrated by Gustaf Tenggren. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Paterson, Katherine (1978). The Great Gilly Hopkins. New York: Crowell.

Stevenson, Robert Louis (1905). A Child's Garden of Verse. Illustrated by Jessie Wilcox Smith. New York: Scribner.

Helping Parents and Teachers Develop Positive Dispositions Toward Reading in Preschool Children

Donna DiPrima Bickel
University of Pittsburgh

One of the primary goals of developmentally appropriate preschool education is to instill positive dispositions (i.e. attitudes) towards learning (Katz, 1986). The goal of reading books to young children is not merely to expose them to the content of a particular book in order that they will "learn" the information. Another purpose is to have them enjoy hearing this story so they will develop an appetite for hearing even more stories read to them in the future. There are several steps that are effective in producing a positive affective quality in a one-on-one story reading time, making it more likely that young children will develop such an appetite (Strayhorn, 1990).

Many excellent early childhood teachers seem to intuitively read to children in an engaging manner. They do not necessarily reflect on the behaviors or elements that make this experience enjoyable for children. Many parents, however, do not seem to develop a style of reading to their children that produces the desired goals. Parents sometimes report that they cannot get their youngster to sit still long enough to complete a story.

In order to help teachers assist parents to do what excellent early childhood teachers often do unconsciously, conference participants were provided with ten steps that can be used in training parents at parent meetings, conferences, workshops, and in volunteer programs, to make story reading a pleasant interaction for all involved.

How to Make Reading Fun for the Very Young Child

1) Make story reading a frequent activity.

2) Select a time when this activity is not competing with the child's strong desire to do something else, e.g. watch a favorite TV show or play with peers.

3) With very young children, it is important to arrange the environment so that there are not many other objects nearby for distraction. Help the child focus his/her attention through environmental manipulation before the reading session starts.

4) If possible, allow the child a choice regarding which book to read first. Preselect the length of the books to match the attentions span of the individual child.

5) Put a great deal of expression into your voice. Emphasize the most important words in a sentence or paragraph.

6) Look back and forth from the book to the child while reading in order to provide social attention as a reinforcer for continued attention to the story by the child.

7) If the child stops paying attention, stop reading without comment. Wait for the child to resume paying attention; then resume reading. If the child gets totally distracted and goes off to do

something else, stop reading and try again at some other time without getting angry.

8) If you know the child very well or if you have reason not to fear accusations of child abuse, allow the child to sit very close to you or on your lap while you read. He or she might even turn the pages for you.

9) Preschool children seem to enjoy hearing the same story over and over again. Capitalize on this by rereading a story as if it were a "fill in the blank" test. For example, "Once there was a boy named _____. He had a friend named _____." This allows the very young child to participate in the "reading" at their own level.

10) After repetitions of the same story, the child may want to try "reading" the whole story back to you by retelling what he/she remembers from each picture. By all means, get excited about this. Show your excitement in facial expression and tone of voice. Accept whatever the child remembers enthusiastically. Provide missing elements only to the extent necessary to keep the story moving and to keep the event a success in the mind of the child.

Specially designed stories that illustrate the decoding process and illustrate the knowledge, skills and fun that can be derived from reading were also shared with the groups (Strayhorn, 1988).

References

Katz, L. (1986). Dispositions in early childhood education. ERIC/EECE Bulletin, 18(2), 1-3.

Strayhorn, J. (1985). (A Manual For Preceptors). Unpublished manual.

Strayhorn, J. (1985). (Modeling Stories for Psychological Skills). Unpublished curriculum materials.

Rights Without Labels: A Mainstreaming Project

Nicolette Armstrong Debra Bennett Marlene Gardner

The idea behind Rights Without Labels is simple. It involves looking at what students need, regardless of category, and then meeting those needs. The essential ingredients define the project but the sum is greater than the parts. The essential ingredients are the ideal, and the implementation of the plan is the reality.

The Rights Without Labels Project means insuring the child's right to the best education without the weight of a label. The process is one of education, and the best education begins with literacy. The goal of the project is to provide services for students in order to meet immediate educational needs and to further the development of the individual learner.

The staff members involved at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, the Pittsburgh Public Schools site, are those individuals who volunteered for the project. Currently, the student population consists of all third grade students, including those who were formerly labeled as "regular", "SED" (socially and emotionally disturbed), "EMR" (educably mentally retarded), and "LD" (learning disabled).

The project offers unique opportunities for the educational process and for the advancement of literacy, however, it also carries with it responsibilities and requirements. The Pennsylvania State Department of Education mandated eight requirements which are an integral part of the project; these are discussed below.

A non-categorical system of service delivery using the Inquiring School Model, the Class Within Class Model, and team planning, are part of the program. The Inquiring School Model allows teachers to simplify complex bodies of information. Students are encouraged to become responsible for learning and to think about specific reasons for learning. The interrelatedness of language skills is stressed; visual structures are used to organize information, and direct teaching and small group instruction are utilized in presenting information. The Class Within Class Model features a high level of collaboration between the special education teacher and regular education teacher. This allows for integrated classrooms and enhanced teaching experiences. Both teachers are responsible for all students and direct instruction is a focus for optimal learning.

Team planning and collaboration among team members is a necessary component. It is critical that time is built into the project for effective teacher planning to occur. During the first year of implementation students were mainstreamed into a regular third grade classroom for all academic subjects. For reading, however, students were ability grouped according to informal and formal testing and teacher recommendations. The range of student ability is all inclusive. Therefore, reading classes are designed based upon the needs of the given student population. There is a Chapter One specialist, a Chapter One educational assistant, and a special education

assistant who also collaborate with the third grade team. Literacy is the objective of the program and the team.

Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA) is another integral part of the program. CBA allows the teacher to measure the student's progress relative to the given curriculum. The Instructional Support Team (IST) is an additional resource designed to assist teachers with both academic and/or behavioral problems within the classroom setting. Meetings are held weekly for the team to suggest intervention strategies for given students. Intervention plans vary, as needed with particular students. For example, Educational Plans are written for students who have been designated as "at-risk" because of a referral to the IST. Individual Educational Plans are a requirement for the "special child".

Parental involvement is of great importance in order to foster the development of children. A parent questionnaire revealed several areas of concern among parents. Workshops have been held to provide pertinent information to the parents. This aspect of the project will continue at varying levels.

Staff development is an on-going process. Numerous workshops and inservice sessions are provided for the teachers to facilitate the development of various strategies necessary for addressing the needs of the diverse student population.

Rights Without Labels: A Mainstreaming Project is challenging and rewarding. This program serves to accomplish what educators have always wanted for their students; students who are actively involved in the learning process, which in turn produce literate adults.

Literacy Through Experimental Verse:

Selected Works of e. e. Cummings

Albert C. Labriola

Department of English, Duquesne University

e. e. Cummings (1894-1962)
from "Portraits"

Buffalo Bill's
defunct
who used to
ride a watersmooth-silver
stallion
and break onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat
Jesus
he was a handsome man
and what i want to know is
how do you like your blueeyed boy
Mister Death

"in Just-"

in Just-
spring when the world is mud-
luscious the little
lame balloonman

whistles far and wee

and eddieandbill come
running from marbles and
piracies and it's
spring

when the world is puddle-wonderful

the queer
old balloonman whistles
far and wee
and bettyandisbel come dancing
from hop-scotch and jump-rope and

it's
spring
and
the

goat-footed

balloonMan whistles
far
and
wee

Experimental verse flouts the aesthetics of formalism and style not simply to be iconoclastic or anarchistic but also to urge its readers, paradoxically, to perceive a higher form of art in the seeming disarray. By means of the higher form of art, an experimental writer communicates another view of reality, one that is not superficially organized, reductively simplistic, and traditional in outlook. The radically different view of reality and the poetic means to communicate it are interrelated symbiotically. Thus, an experimental writer disrupts the conventions of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and typography; challenges traditional word order and syntax; employs strikingly different elements of meter and rhyme; and promotes elliptical and associative logic and inferential reasoning. If annoyance and confusion initially prevail, the reader is eventually enlightened by a multifarious response to the vision of the poet, who destabilizes and complicates our traditional perception of reality. To highlight "reader response" to experimental verse, I have chosen two of e. e. Cummings' more popular poems for analysis, "Buffalo Bill's defunct" and "in Just-", works often cited but rarely explicated.

One of ten poems classified as "Portraits" in the collection titled Tulips and Chimneys (1923), "Buffalo Bill's defunct" was apparently motivated by the New York Sun obituary on January 11, 1917, of William F. Cody. Accordingly, the poem, despite its brevity, alludes to the life and times of Buffalo Bill, whose death not only ends his own life, but brings closure to a chapter in American history. In Buffalo Bill, in other words, nineteenth-century America in the wake of the frontier experience and in the aftermath of the American Civil War are remembered. Salient facts of the life and times of Buffalo Bill include his service as an Indian fighter, a U.S. Army scout and guide, and a buffalo hunter. He was involved in approximately fifteen battles against Indians; on July 17, 1876, at Sioux County, Nebraska, he participated in the scalping of the Cheyenne warrior called "Yellow Hair". Buffalo Bill himself was noted for his long blond hair. He and the American cavalry for which he was both a scout and guide are cited for having wiped out Indian resistance. Buffalo Bill was awarded the Medal of Honor for heroism in the Indian wars, an award that was revoked because civilians were ineligible for military honors. In 1989, however, the award was restored. Interestingly, more than 4,000 buffalo were slain by Buffalo Bill, chiefly to feed the workers on the Union Pacific Railroad. He became a folk hero, whose exploits fueled a spate of pulp fiction about the so-called Wild West and whose traits - courage, endurance, resourcefulness - exemplified what was extolled as the American character at its best.

The Indians having been quelled, the nation again united after the Civil War, and westward expansion having proceeded rapidly, Buffalo Bill became a tour guide for easterners and foreign dignitaries travelling into what had been dangerous territory. Rather than cease activity, Buffalo Bill intensified it by capitalizing on his legendary reputation and starting a Wild West exhibition. Converting moments of heroism into years of showmanship, Buffalo Bill travelled from town to town, profoundly and indelibly affecting the imagination of spectators and the cultural

memory of America. His colorful show featured hard-riding and fast-shooting cowboys, most notably himself. Included, as well, were demonstrations of accurate marksmanship, a pony express ride, yelling Indians, and appearances by Chief Sitting Bull and Annie Oakley.

The foregoing "portrait" of Buffalo Bill is the one by which he is remembered, the one inscribed in American history. To re-examine Buffalo Bill's imprint on history and folklore, Cummings suggests another portrait, one that, while subtly delving into the disharmonies even in the so-called official portrait, promotes another glimpse of Buffalo Bill, his legacy, and the culture that lionized him. By calling him "defunct", rather than "dead", Cummings implies that Buffalo Bill is no longer "functioning" or "functional" as the entrepreneur, impresario, and featured presenter of a whirligig of activity, the Wild West exhibition. Cummings also alludes to the fulfillment of the American dream in Buffalo Bill, whether the so-called heroism, on the one hand, or the business acumen that promoted Buffalo Bill's image nationwide is the greater achievement. Not to be overlooked in the poem is the subtle satire of the gullibility of the American public, whose thrill-seeking incited them to attend the sensational shows and to read the adventure-packed novels.

By his use of the sibilants ("s" and "z" sounds), Cummings re-creates the air-hissing speed of the riders; by his choice of "watersmooth silver", he alludes to the lubricity of quicksilver and to the volume, velocity, and sheen of water that flows so rapidly that it has no ripples. The word "stallion", containing "stall" and "tall", suggests the explosive speed of a horse released from its stall; and though the spectators look "down" into the bed of the arena, they paradoxically "elevate" Buffalo Bill as the cynosure of their admiring gaze. The juxtaposition without spacing of "onetwothreefourfive" simulates the continuous discharge, uniform accuracy, and near-simultaneous disintegration of five clay pigeons, which disappear in a virtual blink of the eye. The irony and realism in the visual dynamics of disappearing pigeons highlight the "fact" that Buffalo Bill's reputation derives from his success and efficiency as a killer. For him, the "killing fields" were the Wild West, from which both Indians and buffalo rapidly disappeared. Through the parodic re-enactment in the Wild West exhibition of Buffalo Bill's machine-like efficiency as a killer, Cummings decries the wholesale death inflicted by a hero of American culture. Both the hero and his admirers, in effect, are indicted for having perceived Indians and animals as targets of opportunity, as clay pigeons. Interestingly, the Indian and the buffalo are national icons: together they appear on opposite sides of a nickel that was minted in the last years of Buffalo Bill's career as a showman. An earlier coin was the Indian Head cent. The colloquialism - "not worth a plugged cent" or "not worth a plugged nickel" - while visual and verbal shorthand for a targeting exercise, is a grim reminder that the icons on the nickel and the real presences that they depict vanished with the incessant discharge of guns. Significantly, more than one account of Buffalo Bill's Wild West show dwells on the shooting of coins as a demonstration of marksmanship.

In a larger sense, Cummings questions the authenticity and durability of the legendary portrait of Buffalo Bill, shatters notions of the heroic ideal in American culture, and subtly etches a counter-portrait of a killer. The poet may thus be perceived as an iconoclast, a trenchant critic of American society, and an avenger.

While the word "Jesus" seems to be an expletive, mindlessly uttered in instinctive admiration of a breath-taking feat of speed and marksmanship, it is in a position of syntactic ambiguity: "pigeons just like that Jesus" and "Jesus he was a handsome man". The multifarious responses elicited include at least the following. Buffalo Bill's destructive career ravaged not only humankind and animals alike but thereby erased the image or imprint of God on those distinctive, indeed unique, forms of creation. The continuum of uninterrupted destruction for which Buffalo Bill is responsible includes clay pigeons, coins and the images on them, animals, Indians, and indeed the living presence of Christ in creation and in creatures. Not to be overlooked is Buffalo Bill's self-defacement, whereby his evil destruction of others eradicated Christ's image or imprint in himself. What awaits Buffalo Bill after death is an encounter with the all-judging Lord, whose penetrating eye, like that of the poet, will cut beneath the portrait of a national hero, a portrait shaped by the admiration and adulation of the public. At the time of reckoning, the force of retributive justice will be brought to bear on the undisguised villain. While Jesus may indeed be a "handsome man" in some icons and portraits, ironic understatement in the poem suggests that his visage will be contorted with rage and a just anger when he confronts the other "handsome man", Buffalo Bill, an idol upheld and falsely worshipped by the American public, an idol for whom the destruction that he wreaked on others awaits himself. One surmises that the vision of the poet anticipates the glance of the Lord.

By calling Buffalo Bill the "blueeyed boy" of "Mister Death", Cummings implies a father-son relationship. If Mister Death fathered Buffalo Bill, then the killing impulses were engendered in the son by his begetter. Mr. Death, like the American public, ironically perceives his killer-son as "blueeyed", a synecdoche that points to the "fair-haired" and blond appearance of Buffalo Bill. The heinous misdeeds of genocide and the near-extermination of a species of animal will surely cause Mister Death to "like" his son, especially when the father learns that his son was not simply "liked" but indeed applauded by the people. Ultimately, Cummings' poem is social criticism at its best.

Also from Tulips and Chimneys, Cummings' "in Just-" is grouped with poems called "Chansons Innocentes", alluding to William Blake's Songs of Innocence and the complementary Songs of Experience. Innocence and experience, or the transition from the one state to the other, inform the poem, whose central character, including his identity and significance, is described through a stylistic feature called incremental repetition. Described as "the little lame balloonman", the "queer old balloonman", and the "goat-footed balloonMan", who in all three

instances "whistles far and wee", he is a rendition of Pan, the god of the goatherds and shepherds. A goat-man, he was akin to the satyrs; like them, he inhabited the thickets, forests, and mountains, all places of wilderness. Upon his reed pipe (called a Panpipe), this lesser god played music for the dancing nymphs. Like the satyrs, he loved the nymphs but was rejected because of his ugly appearance: cleft foot and deformed and aging body. He was a lecher whose pursuits of nymphs such as Echo, Pithys, and Syrinx are well-recounted in classical literature. The haunts that he frequented, the urges and appetites that impelled him, and the distinctive cleft foot all profoundly affected later Christian conceptions of the devil, whose humanoid appearance in art resembles that of Pan and the satyrs.

While the sinister, if not evil, side of Pan is thus portrayed, including his role as a classical analogue of the devil, the more wholesome associations of the figure derive from his resemblance to Christ the Good Shepherd. Tending the flocks, Pan was interpreted as a caring herder whose salutary influence extended not only to the well-being and procreative functions of the livestock but also to the fertility of the fields and pastures. He was an inspiriting force of springtime and of the vitality and fecundity associated with such seasonal growth and change.

Against this rich and ambiguous frame of reference, where tensions are evident in the contexts involving Pan, Cummings' balloonman enters the world of the poem, which deals with the psycho-sexual awakening in children, the rite of passage into adolescence, the disruption of friendships made in childhood, and the initiation of relationships thereafter. By his visual and aural appeal - balloons and whistling - the balloonman, like the Pied Piper, gains a following among the children of any town or village. The colorful balloons and the strings or streamers by which they are held in tow, the merry whistle, the gaggle of boys and girls, and their subsequent interaction all suggest a tableau of the Maypole at springtime and the swirl of activity associated with it. While the two boys at first are playing together and the girls with one another, the poem anticipates that these relationships will be disrupted. The boys are playing at "marbles and piracies", the girls at "hop-scotch and jump-rope" games traditionally associated in our culture with young males and females. The bonding in each relationship is implied by the names of the partners "eddieandbill" and "bettyandisbel" - joined by coordinate conjunctions and juxtaposed without spacing. Despite these grammatical and typographic devices that suggest relationships, the poem by its phonology hints at imminent disunion. A reader is virtually impelled by this phonology to speculate on the relationships that will be established when childhood gives way to adolescence. Thus, in the style and technique of Cummings, one may argue that "eddieandbetty", which are true rhymes, and "billandisbel", which manifest both assonance and consonance, not to mention the double union of a coordinate conjunction and copulative verb, will be the adolescent pairings.

When the children are first attracted to the balloonman, the boys "come running", and the

girls "come dancing". The use of present participles and parallel construction suggests ongoing activity, but the chief vowel sound in "come" and "running" is that of the schwa, variations of which, whether spelled with a "u" or an "o", are heard in words such as "Just", "mud", "luscious", "balloonman", "puddle", "wonderful", "hop", "scotch", and "jump", not to mention the. The schwa, at times enhanced by consonance and often calling attention to variations of internal rhyme, echoes the very interjection or exclamation - "Ah!" - that expresses the emotion of surprise, which will be experienced by the boys and girls, who, despite previous associations, will enter into new relationships after their encounter with the opposite sex. The phenomenon of uncoupling as a prelude to a different union is reflected, as well, in the two compounds, "mud-luscious" and "puddle-wonderful". Though the schwa phonologically unites the two words in each compound, disunion and reorientation produce the following new relationships: "mud-puddle" and "luscious-wonderful". The former denotes the place where children typically play, splashing and soiling themselves; the latter designates the emotion of wonder at the onset of springtime, a season marked by luxuriant growth and verdant beauty. To re-create, in turn, two words from "luscious-wonderful", one need simply perceive "lush-wonder", an implied description of spring and the emotion that it evokes, not too far removed from the celebration of vitality in nature and humankind alike that Cummings both admired and advocated. Even the suffixes of "luscious-wonderful" may be read phonologically as "is full", a phrase that obliquely recalls "isbel".

By its emphasis on mud and water, growth and vitality, sexuality and propagation, the poem may be read as a displacement and adaptation of the creation myth or the account of primal creation in Genesis. The loam from which Adam was created, the inspiriting that ensued, the creation of Eve, her introduction to and relationship with Adam in the verdant Garden of Eden, and the procreative function of their relationship mandated by God are all elements in the paradigm adumbrated in Scripture. Against the foregoing context, the balloonman enters. His classical analogue is Pan, not only the lecherous goat-man, the prototype in physical appearance of the Christian conception of the devil, but also the Good Shepherd who oversees the well-being of his flock and encourages their propagation. By awakening in the children the impulses or instincts of sexuality, the balloonman, in effect, creates new beings, promotes other relationships, and imparts the potential for consequences - evil, goodness, and variations or interactions thereof - that may result from the pairings of male and female in adolescence and eventually adulthood. One surmises that the unusual spelling of "balloonMan" in its third appearance in the poem looks toward adulthood.

The rapidity with which the changeover from innocence to experience, from childhood to adolescence, takes place is signified by the title of the poem, "in Just-", which is a colloquialism for flicker-fast transition, for what occurs in the snap of one's fingers. By a remarkable economy of language, the poet employs the unusual spelling and modified typographic appearance of the

same phrase - "far and wee" - to imply what the previous friendships were and what the new relationships will become. The phrase is a variation of the more commonplace "far and wide". On the first two occasions of its use, there is spacing, more than usual, between the words "far and wee" to signify the distance of the balloonman from the children when they first hear his whistle. To be sure, the poet is capitalizing on the reader's expectation that "wide" should be used. Distance is also implied in that the children while bonded in their previous friendships seem impervious to change. The word "wee", by its unusual spelling that prolongs the pronunciation, affirms and iterates what appears to be an integral union. Nevertheless, severance occurs, and other relationships are established, also signified by "far and wee". The partners in the new relationship, though separated in childhood, are from adolescence mutually attracted. The spacing between the words disappears, and even their horizontal deployment gives way to a vertical linear arrangement, which suggests the speed of gravity as the index of rapid movement and the "natural" force that will bond male and female.

Within the dynamics of severance and union achieved under the aegis of the balloonman, one perceives that the poet himself is subtly hinting at his craft, an endeavor to wrench language from traditional usage, disrupt habitual patterns, disintegrate words, and to create anew. Perhaps Cummings' most subtle gesture in the poem is the imprint of authorial presence. "Come" is used twice, followed by -ing words, to suggest Cummings. Finally, the bonding between author and reader may be implied by the word "wee", the signature in our interpretive imagination of Edward ("Eddie") Estlin Cummings, who is perhaps encouraging "reader response" to a degree previously unrealized.

Enriching Early Literacy with Long-Term Projects

Jeanette Allison Hartman
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Teachers face many challenges when trying to enrich students' emerging literacy. In the field of early education it is critical that students have meaningful literacy experiences. Long-term projects (i.e., two or more weeks) are a successful approach to ensure that students participate in relevant literacy learning. The word "long-term" is included because if students participate in projects that require their sustained attention it is likely that they will have highly successful experiences using language (e.g., discussing next-steps together, and listening to others' ideas, labeling the project).

The purpose of this paper is to describe how long-term projects help to develop students' emerging literacy skills (i.e., oral and written language that is developed in spontaneous and deliberate ways). The introduction includes a definition of projects, and how to select project topics. The phases of project work are then described. In conclusion, early literacy and project work are related. For an in-depth review about projects, it is recommended that the reader consult Katz and Chard (1989), Spodek (in press), Hartman (in press; 1990), Brown (in press), and Kilpatrick (1918, 1936).

What is a "Project"?

A project is "an in-depth study of a particular topic that one or more children undertake. It consists of exploring a topic or theme such as 'going to the hospital' or 'building a house'...over a period of days or weeks, depending on the students' ages and the nature of the topic" (Katz & Chard, 1989). Projects differ from "themes" or "units" mainly by the time-span of the project and the origin of the project's topic. Generally, the time-span of a project is from two weeks to three or four months depending on the topic. The topic originates from students' real-life experiences. Whereas, a theme or a unit usually spans a few days and originates from the teacher's ideas or teachers' manuals (Hartman & Eckerty, in preparation).

Projects can be small or large in scale. For example, small-scale projects occur in confined spaces such as creating a model of an airport on top of a table. Larger projects, such as reconstructing a library, are constructed in large spaces such as in the corner of the classroom. If space is a problem, teachers can collaborate with each other by joining both classes for the project time. The project is developed in one classroom, while in the other classroom additional activities are conducted (e.g., block building, a writer's corner, traditional lessons, etc.).

How are Topics Selected?

Generally, project topics are generated and decided upon together by the students and the teacher. Katz and Chard (1989) and Spodek (in press) include some general project topics that

apply to almost any region in America: Homes, families, food, school bus, hospital, transportation, roads, plants, rivers, hats, community helpers, publishing center, etc. With younger students, teachers need to observe students' play, and listen to their conversations in order to determine what topics can be developed into projects. For instance, if young students' play reflects an on-going event, such as the building of the new Pittsburgh airport, the teacher can propose that topic to students in a group meeting. Simply say, "Many of you are interested in the new Pittsburgh airport. Would you like to find out more about the new airport? We could visit the airport (or have a guest visitor) and build our own." In other words, with younger students (i.e., preschool through kindergarten) project topics may need to be solidified by the teacher, although they emerge from students' interests. However, with older students, project topics can be generated and decided upon as a group. For example, during a large group meeting, students offer their ideas, say the Duquesne Incline or Kennywood Park, to the teacher who writes them down on a large piece of paper. The group talks about the possibility of developing each topic. The topic is then narrowed down by a vote or group consensus.

After selecting a topic, students (younger and older) begin the first phase of project work. Next, the phases of project work are described. Keep in mind literacy skills that are developed throughout the phases.

What is the Structure of Project Work?

It may be helpful to think about projects as occurring in three basic phases. These three phases are similar to the B-D-A (Before-During-After) structure of reading lessons. That is, before starting the project the teacher and students brainstorm about the topic and collect resources; during the projects students actively reconstruct the phenomenon under investigation; and after the project students evaluate their progress and the project's next-steps. Below, a "school library" project is briefly illustrated in order to explain the three phases of project work. These ideas are flexible to the teacher's and students' needs and can be applied to any topic.

Usually, the first phase of project work includes group meetings and a field trip. During group meetings students make predictions as to the characteristics and functions of a school library. Ask them, "Who has been to our school library? What do you think of the library? What happened during your visit? Why do we need a library in our school?" During this time, write down students' comments on a large piece of paper for all to see. Then pass around different items from the library (e.g., books, check-out cards, book marks). Then, students visit the library and check out books to take to the classroom.

The second phase of project work includes follow-up activities based on the field trip (or a guest speaker). The purpose in this phase is for students to reconvene and check their predictions made earlier, and to discuss how they can reconstruct their own "library" in the classroom. Each child talks about aspects of the field trip that were especially appealing. You may want to

make semantic maps with their responses (see Corwin, Hein, & Levin, 1976; Katz & Chard, 1989; Hartman, in press). At this time, students, parents, and teachers bring in materials necessary for reconstruction. Usually, boxes of all sizes serve as the "skeleton" of a project. For instance, a refrigerator box can be used as the check-out area; small boxes can serve as storage shelves for home-made and library books. Remember that students need to be in charge as much as possible.

The third phase of project work includes students settling in and role playing with their project. Students need uninterrupted time to use their project now. They can make books, book marks, etc., and add details to the library. When students' interest in the project begins to wane, the project can be adapted (e.g., bookstore) or terminated so that another project can begin. Keep in mind that students need to have daily group meetings in order to discuss their progress. Compared to traditional curricula, students are more in the "driver's seat".

This final phase also includes evaluating students' progress and deciding on next steps. Evaluation occurs throughout the entire project, such as with portfolios that contain writing samples and photographs. But at this point teachers observe students while they use the library, and evaluate them with anecdotal records, checklists, and interviews. Also, teachers may want to ask themselves the following questions:

1. How much did students do on their own and with each other?
2. Were students involved in the whole process: idea starting, planning, gathering, and working with materials?
3. Did students understand the uses of oral and written language, i.e., whole literacy?
4. Did students have opportunities to verbalize, write down, and implement their ideas?
5. Were concepts integrated across content areas as much as possible?

How Do Projects Relate to Early Literacy?

The purpose of this article has been to suggest that students' emerging literacy can be enriched with long-term projects. That is, teachers can offer meaningful literacy learning by allowing students to thoroughly examine their surroundings (e.g., new airport, bus, school library) over extended periods of time. The above library project reveals that students are involved in various aspects of the project's life. Given such variety, students have many opportunities to develop receptive and expressive language skills. Development stems from students trying out oral and written language in the different roles in which they participate. Because projects focus on students' immediate environments, students interact more freely with language compared to formal curricula. Projects offer students literacy-rich experiences in non-threatening ways. Projects give students opportunities to use literacy skills and knowledge that are useful and that make sense.

Conclusion

Many aspects of project work are similar to Whole Language and an integrated curriculum program. And, if you have ever investigated a phenomenon in depth with your students you

probably engaged in a project-like activity. However, most American schools underemphasize project-like activities, especially with literacy instruction. Too often educators assume that the secret to developing early literacy skills in young students lies in fancy, pre-fabricated curricula. Seldom do we look closely at the early literacy opportunities inherent in students' lives (Hartman, 1990). Yet it is in natural contexts, like project work, where whole literacy is enriched, that is, reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Katz & Chard, 1989; Hartman, in press, 1990; Spodeck, in press; Teale & Sulzby, 1989; Clay, 1979; Mason, 1986).

References

Brown, P.C. (in press). Developing an integrative unit for kindergarten. In B. Spodek (Ed.), Selecting Educationally Appropriate Kindergarten Practices: Beyond Developmental Appropriateness. Washington, DC: NEA.

Clay, M. (1979). Reading: The Patterning of Complex Behavior. (2nd ed.). Aukland, New Zealand: Heinemann Educational Books.

Corwin, C., Hein, G.E., & Levin, D. (1976). Weaving curriculum webs: The structure of nonlinear curriculum. Childhood Education, 52, 248-251.

Hartman, J.A. (1990). Fostering emerging oral and written language through projects. In C. King & R. Bean (Eds.), Literacy Instruction: Practices, Problems, Promises. (88-92). Pittsburgh, PA: The University of Pittsburgh.

Hartman, J.A. (in press). Fostering emergent literacy in a publishing center. In B. Spodek (Ed.), Selecting Educationally Appropriate Kindergarten Practices: Beyond Developmental Appropriateness. Washington, DC: NEA.

Hartman, J.A., & Eckerty, C. (in preparation). Complementing the kindergarten curriculum with projects.

Katz, L.G., & Chard, S.C. (1989). Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Kilpatrick, W.H. (1918). The project method. Teachers College Record, 19, 319-335.

Kilpatrick, W.H. (1936). Remaking the Curriculum. New York: Newson and Company.

Mason, J.M. (1986). A problem-solving approach to reading. In B. Spodek (Ed.), Today's Kindergarten. (pp. 48-66). New York: Teachers College Press.

Spodek,B. (Ed.) (in press). Selecting Educationally Appropriate Kindergarten Practices: Beyond Developmental Appropriateness. Washington, DC: NEA.

Teale, W.H., & Sulzby, E. (1989). Emergent literacy: New Perspectives. In D.S. Strickland, & L. Morrow (Eds.), Emerging Literacy: Young Children Learn to Read and Write (pp. 1-15). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

The Heartwood Project: An Ethics Curriculum for Children

Eleanore Gettleman
Penny Levy
Nancy Pichert
Pat Wood

The Heartwood Project addresses an urgent need felt in Pittsburgh and across America. Too many of our young people are growing up without a solid moral framework. The bond of elders teaching the young has been severed. The wisdom that introduces the wonder of life and the lessons learned in a lifetime are not being passed on to them. There is a declining influence by religious and social institutions. Additionally, the media are exposing our children to violence and disrespect for human dignity. Too often children become confused and are unable to make sound choice and think through the consequences of their actions.

The results of this problem are known to all Americans. A quarter of our young people do not finish high school. A growing percentage of children who do stay in school do not achieve well and are not prepared for the world of work. As a result, unemployment and underemployment rates are high for these young people. More than ten percent of teenage girls become pregnant each year; teenage substance abuse and child abuse are on the rise. More and more children are becoming juvenile delinquents, and many of these are involved with selling drugs and other violent crimes. In addition, every year over a half million children in America attempt suicide; an average of 5,000 of them succeed.

From the perspective of educators, increasing numbers of children are disruptive, bored, angry, confused, and without hope. For many of these, their moral framework includes only what is best for them at the moment. The breakdown of the family; the lack of positive role models; and television, with its messages of violence and fantasy, all contribute to this.

There is an urgent need to take steps now to help our troubled children develop the moral and ethical fabric they will need to function in society as capable and contributing adults. Too often the home cannot provide the instruction required for the establishment of a solid moral framework. There is a growing need for care-giving institutions to teach character development. For all these reasons, a partnership among home, school, and community must concern itself with ethical and social development to have the greatest influence on a child's development.

It is time for schools to have the courage to teach character development. It is time to solve the problem of our youth growing up without a solid moral framework. It is time to introduce our young people to the attributes that will keep them and our society strong and stable.

Development of the Heartwood Project

Five years ago, Eleanore Gettlemen, a Pittsburgh lawyer with fifteen years of experience representing juveniles accused of violent crimes, became disturbed about the number of adolescents lacking a basic sense of right and wrong. These youths were unable to make wise

choices or determine the consequences of their actions. They had not assimilated the attributes necessary for appropriate moral behavior and character.

Gettleman's concern led to action. She turned to her daughter's teacher, Patricia Wood. Knowing firsthand of its need, Wood eagerly joined Gettleman to explore solutions to the ethics crisis. Two master teachers, Barbara Lanke and Patricia Flach, who also were struggling with the same issues in their professional practice, were recruited. Together they joined to develop a kindergarten through sixth grade ethics curriculum.

Their work began with exhaustive research of the history and present state of moral education. They sought the advice of publishers, authors, and experts in schools and universities. They found direction from such people as children's author Margaret Hodges, moral educator Tom Lickona, and television's Fred Rogers.

The group defined these basic parameters within which the first curriculum unit grew and established the foundation for future units' development:

1. The focus must be multicultural in order to teach values common to all cultures, communities, and religions.
2. Learning must begin as early as possible.
3. The program should be literature based. Using a story as the vehicle, a child would embrace a moral value through the affective domain. As Margaret Hodges said, "What the heart knows today, the head will understand tomorrow."

Hundreds of stories were examined. Only the finest, well-illustrated books were included, those with powerful stories guaranteed to "touch the heart". Twenty-one were selected and around these a program was designed to be easily assimilated into the classroom and the teacher's already crowded curriculum. At the core of the Heartwood plan are the seven attributes of **courage, loyalty, justice, respect, hope, honesty** and **love**. These attributes are presented through examples found in the quality literature chosen. Folk tales, biographies, hero stories, legends, and contemporary tales garnered from around the world are the "roots" of the program. The books are presented in a kit that also includes a rainbow of cards in a lucite box. For each book, a curriculum card provides a brief summary, story concepts, specific activities. The hands-on activities are interdisciplinary. The kit also houses a world map with pins to mark the country of the story's origin, a set of international flags, a video, and a 150 page teacher's manual. The kit is color coded for easy access. The colors represent each of the attributes as follows:

Red - **courage** Orange - **loyalty** Yellow - **justice** Green - **respect**

Blue - **hope** Indigo - **honesty** White - **love**

In the classroom the program develops as follows:

1. **Preview** - Draws upon prior knowledge and sets a purpose for listening.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

2. **Reading the selection** - Highlights the attribute to be explored.

3. **Discussion** - Teacher leads discussion drawing upon critical thinking and problem solving strategies to help students understand the attribute(s) presented in the story and to internalize positive behavior and changing character traits.

4. **Activities** - "Hands-on" activities, cooperative learning, group activities, resource persons, and families reinforce the attribute.

5. **Wrap-up** - Here the student's personal response to the attribute is developed in written form.

6. **Extension** - The Home/School Connection is forged as students share projects, written work, home assignments with family and return to share at school.

7. **Interdisciplinary Ideas** - Here is the Culture Connection where the ethnic heritage of the story is explored and celebrated, pointing to the universal nature of the attributes. We notice similarities and celebrate differences. The Curriculum Connection is evident in the integrated activities suggested.

The Vision of the Heartwood Project

The Heartwood team was drawn together with a collective vision and dedication to improve the moral climate of our nation and ultimately the world. The place to begin was with our future, our children. The vehicle used became the centuries-old method of teaching through stories. The goal was the understanding of values that build respect for all people and all cultures.

The Pittsburgh Public Schools recognized the need for an integrated character education program and successfully piloted The Heartwood Project under the direction of Dr. Gregory Morris, and the coordination of Nancy Pichert, Division of Reading and Literature, and Penny Levy, Pittsburgh Pilot Teachers. Students' written responses have revealed an amazing depth of understanding of the core character attributes. As Heartwood works through the curriculum towards its goals, the team envisions a world of people who understand and promote the concepts of **courage, loyalty, justice, respect, hope, honesty,** and **love**.

Liberty, Learning, and Literacy:
Promoting Higher Order Thinking in the Social Studies Classroom

Caryn M. King
Grand Valley State University

William E. McDonald
Falk Laboratory School

For eight weeks during the winter of 1991, a project was conducted in which literacy was emphasized within the context of one social studies classroom. The overall goal for this unit of instruction was to create language-rich experiences that would stimulate higher order thinking about the concept of Liberty. Additionally, students were to become more aware of the cognitive aspects of learning. This paper describes some of the reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities that fourth graders encountered as they learned about Liberty.

The activities involving literacy, hereafter called literacy events, were planned with the following ideas in mind. First, literacy events should initially expose students to subject matter. More importantly, however, literacy events should also provide students with opportunities to interpret, apply, and reflect upon their subject matter knowledge (Banks, 1990). Second, it is necessary to preserve and maintain the wholeness of literacy events (Goodman, 1986). This means that literacy events should not be brief, isolated exercises. Rather, they should be genuine activities that have meaningful purposes. Finally, literacy events must be social events since human interaction is an important component of literate behavior (Heath, 1991).

A variety of traditional and innovative instructional materials provided the starting point for many of the literacy events. In this classroom, a social studies textbook was not used during this unit of instruction. Instead, a variety of reading materials exposed students to multiple viewpoints and contexts for Liberty. Excerpts from primary historical documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech were used. Students read Scholastic News as well as other magazines, newspaper articles, and books brought in from home. In addition, materials such as encyclopedias, library books, and one workbook were used. During the Liberty Unit, students were also taught how to use an interactive video disk program. Technology as a tool for learning is often dehumanized in relation to student/teacher interaction. However, the opportunity to program this technology, to select particular sections for use, and to add or give directions to commercially produced material, provided many learning alternatives in the areas of shared discussion, higher order thinking, and writing. The resultant interactions between students themselves and with the teacher created a stimulating environment for learning about Liberty.

The first literacy event involved the oral presentation of two historical vignettes. The first vignette dealt with the Revolutionary War and the second with the forming of the U.S. Constitution. Both vignettes were presented by the teacher early in the unit and exposed students

to subject matter by way of listening and note taking. The day before the first vignette was presented, students discussed the difficulty in deciding what to include when taking notes during a lecture. They concluded that lectures would be most beneficial if they were presented in a hierarchial format (i.e., presentation of a main idea followed by supporting details). Following this discussion, the teacher decided that the hierarchical format would be used when presenting each vignette. A graphic organizer was created and written on the board to visually show students the main ideas. In addition, details consisting of important names, dates, and places were written on the board. Students could now concentrate on the listening task at hand rather than worry about missing an important name, using the incorrect spelling, etc. Throughout the actual presentations, students' attention was often directed to the board in order to guide their listening and note taking. This was done not only to structure the activity for our fourth graders, but also to show them that their input about this authentic activity was valued.

The second literacy event was the creation of a Martin Luther King collage. This activity provided students with the opportunity to interact with one another for the purpose of interpreting and synthesizing the subject matter. To do this, pairs of students read different chapters from the Martin Luther King, Jr.: His Life and Dream (Farris, 1986) workbook. Students also participated in a school-wide celebration of King's birthday. Then, working in groups of four, students created a collage to summarize the information in the chapter they had read. Each student was required to contribute something to the collage and provide justification for its inclusion. When all groups were finished, a large group discussion took place. Each group presented its collage to the class and answered questions from classmates. A large classroom collage depicting the life of Martin Luther King was created from the individual ones. The large collage was hung on the wall and was a frequent reference point throughout the remainder of the unit.

The third type of literacy event required students to write in response journals. This writing activity served three functions: to know oneself, to participate in community activities, and to demonstrate academic competence (Marzano, 1991). In preparation for one writing assignment, students read and discussed excerpts from the Declaration of Independence, King's "I Have a Dream" speech, and President George Bush's letter which was written to Saddam Hussein prior to the onset of the Persian Gulf War. During class discussions, students first considered each document and its relationship to the theme of liberty. Then, students discussed the similarities and differences of each document as it related to liberty. Students were encouraged to discuss the same topics with their parents. Finally, students wrote a journal entry that compared and contrasted the three documents in terms of their own personal notion of liberty. This literacy event provided students with the opportunity to think deeply about the concept of Liberty in more than one historical context. Moreover, it required students to orally discuss their ideas not only with their classmates and teacher but also with their parents. In this sense, this

literacy event was a social event as well as a personal learning event.

During this unit, students received teacher feedback about their journal writing and also shared their written responses with one another. For example, one series of lessons included watching a Civil War video (Burns, 1989). After viewing the video and discussing the content each day, students wrote an unstructured response. Then students paired and read each other's work. Afterward, as a whole group, the process of sharing written ideas with one another was discussed. Students told us that the process of sharing was often difficult because different people had different ideas, and sometimes students did not agree with one another. A single question, "How does this experience relate to the Civil War?" was enough for most students to connect their experience with those of people living during the time of the Civil War. In this instance, literacy provided a means by which students could make important, revealing connections between subject matter content and their own lives.

The fourth literacy event involved the interactive video disk. Three specific lessons were designed using The Statue of Liberty video disk (Burns, 1985). 1) Quick Quotes - a whole lesson on paraphrasing short quotations from the disk; 2) Big Quotes - a program completed by pairs of students that required them to write "what" was said, "who" said it, "why" that person had been selected to speak, and "how" that quote impacted students' views of liberty; 3) Faces, Feelings, and Futures - a series of frames selected from the video disk to be viewed by students at their leisure, after which they were required to write a list of adjectives and then an essay describing their interpretations of the immigrants' lives and thoughts. This was an important aspect of the Liberty unit because the lessons involving this technology were highly motivational for students and stimulated higher order thinking about the concept of Liberty.

Student assessment was on-going throughout the Liberty unit. Given our goals for the unit, it was important to monitor the processes of learning in addition to the products of learning. To accomplish this, students were observed informally as they completed various tasks. A type of portfolio assessment was used. Students created Liberty folders in which completed work and work in progress was kept. Students' response journals were also placed in the Liberty folder. Frequently throughout the unit, students' response journals were read, and the teacher wrote comments in the journals made about the ideas and questions that students had written. Often, written comments would refer one student to another student who had expressed interest in the same topic. Other work that was placed in the Liberty folders was also examined. This process yielded valuable information regarding how well students were reacting to the activities and the materials selected for use during this unit. Moreover, it provided insight in designing subsequent instruction that was meaningful and challenging to the students.

The literacy events associated with this unit on Liberty were often social events that had a particular significance to the students in the classroom. Such an emphasis stimulated thinking

and discussion, evaluation and interpretation, and writing and revision. The final outcome of these lessons was much more than the mere recognition and recall of subject matter so evident in many social studies classrooms. As one student wrote in her journal, "I think the way this was set up with learning centers, bulletin boards, and many things to say and do was great. It was challenging, but not too challenging and not too easy. I think that's how most classes should be."

References

Banks, J.A. (1990). Teaching Strategies for the Social Studies: Inquiry, Valuing, and Decision Making (4th ed.). While Plains, NY: Longman.

Burns, K. (1985). The Statue of Liberty. (Video disk) American Documentaries, Inc. (Producer). Stamford, CT: Vestron Video (Distributor).

Burns, K. (Producer & Director) (1989). The Civil War (Film). New York: Florentine Film

Farris, C. King (1986). Martin Luther King, Jr.: His Life and Dream. Lexington, MA: Ginn & Co.

Goodman, K.S. (1986). What's Whole in Whole Language? Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Heath, S. Brice (1991). The sense of being literate: Historical and cross-cultural features. In R. Barr, M.L. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, & P.D. Pearson (Eds.), Handbook of Reading Research Volume II (pp. 3-25). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Marzano, R.J. (1991). Language, the language arts, and thinking. In J. Flood, J.M. Jensen, D. Lapp, & R.J. Squire (Eds.), Handbook of Research on Teaching the English Language Arts (pp. 559-586). New York: Macmillan.

Teaching After the Summer Institute:
Where I've Been and Where I'm Going

Mimi Botkin
Pittsburgh Public Schools

I like to look at my teaching career, all 21 years of it, as a journey. It has always been an interesting journey, but never easy. In 1970, as a brand new, very naive 22-year-old teacher faced with seventh and eighth graders at Westinghouse High School, I wanted simply to change the world. And I figured that the best way to do this was to teach English. Teaching English, to me, meant literature and writing, the two most enjoyable enterprises the teaching world had to offer. My preparation for this venture was meager at best, but thank God, I was too naive to know that. Yes, I was fully accredited and credentialed, with all the requisite courses in literature from John Milton to Arthur Miller. Certainly I had written tons of papers, because that's the whole focus of an English major's life. I wrote these papers dutifully, but with great joy, because I had always loved to write, from the angst-driven poetry of a misunderstood 13-year-old, to a senior paper comparing the hero in Death in Venice to the classic Greek hero.

But here I was in 1970, teaching in an inner city high school, where writing was not only encouraged, but mandatory. My first three years of teaching were spent under the watchful eye of the Conant program. Each student in my three classes was expected to write a composition per week. I had a release period every day in which to correct these papers, and my supervisor came yearly to read selected writing folders. This should have seemed like heaven to someone who truly looked forward to using writing to teach. There was only one problem, and it was a biggie: I had absolutely no idea how to go about teaching writing. Nothing in my undergraduate work as an English Education major gave me a clue. Yes, I always wrote, but nobody ever taught me how to teach others to do what I did so naturally.

And so I did what most beginning teachers do: pretend to know what I was doing; have the students pump out paper after paper, week after week; bleed all over them with red-inked, mostly-ignored comments; and muddle my way through. Essentially, I would put a composition topic on the board and pray, because I had no idea how to teach students to write. I just assumed if my assignments were creative enough, and my comments plentiful enough, my students would turn out to be wonderful, or at least competent, writers. Miracles do still occur, however, never mind that neither the students nor I knew what was happening to any of us. My writing folders were always full by the end of the year, and my students did seem to like to write.

I continued on my merry way for thirteen years, teaching writing with a blend of intuition, prayer, and sharing ideas with other struggling teachers. Then came the event that shaped and reshaped my teaching for years to come: the Western Pennsylvania Writing Project. I heard about

it through a friend and saw an announcement on the bulletin board at work. I was ripe for this opportunity; I was not burned out, but I sure was burned down. Something was missing from my teaching, but I could not put words to it. And what a deal: six free graduate credits (the Pittsburgh Board of Education pays the tuition for its teachers), and the chance to write again. Both ideas seemed equally appealing, because I needed the credits and I needed to remember how much I loved to write. The saddest evolution of my teaching had been that, in the midst of all this student writing, I had not composed one word of my own. The irony that I was attempting to teach what I no longer did never occurred to me.

But the summer of 1983 changed all that as I began another uncharted leg of my teaching voyage. With sixteen other teachers, elementary, middle, and secondary, I began to learn how much I still needed to learn about the teaching of writing. We wrote, we shared our writing, we read the bibles of the writing world: the Lucy Calkins and the Donald Graves, names I had never heard before. Something began to happen, early on, because the summer institute is such an intense experience. We grew together, learned together, and learned about what made each of us who we were, with amazing speed. And this intimacy, this knowing about each other, could have come from only one source: our writing. When we read someone's writing, we read who he is, wants to be, wishes he was not. My own writing brought out events and feelings I sometimes was not even aware of, but I was willing to share them in this community of writers.

Hand in hand with this awakening to my own writing came the strategies to help me bring this about for my students. These new teaching friends, these authors, showed me ways to guide my students through the murky waters of writing, instead of throwing them into the deep end and yelling, "Swim! Swim!" Through five weeks of reading, I learned that writing was a process, that it wasn't just a five-paragraph essay due at the end of the period. Writing was brainstorming to see what was inside my head, it was draft after draft, revision after revision and not just to correct the grammar. Writing was sharing with other writers, getting a different perspective on my words, a new look at what my words had to say for me. My writing had value in and of itself, even if no one else ever saw it. I learned to write to see my thinking, to see if it had credibility. Writing was liberating, joyful, connecting, painful.

By the end of the institute, I knew my teaching of writing would never be the same. Now, in fact, my teaching of writing could begin. And I would teach differently now, because I had to. I would never be able to go back to the old ways, because I had seen too much of what the other world had to offer, the one where writing had meaning to the author, where the way his mind worked was crucial, and where sharing and responding made writing in isolation a lonely trip.

Unfortunately, though, my new knowledge had to wait a year to be implemented. September 1983, found me six months pregnant, with a year of maternity leave on the immediate agenda. So I did much writing of poetry, calling a writing project friend to hear me out and give

me feedback. I could not write without an ear anymore.

Back to the classroom I went in September, 1984, enthusiastic, filled with strands of ideas, eager to try them out. I did use many of the strategies I learned the previous summer. Something, though, was missing; the instant excitement I had expected just was not materializing, for me or my students. There were sporadic successes with a new approach to teaching poetry, or a different type of essay question, but the strands somehow did not knit together to form a pattern, something I could recognize as my new "writing teacher" self. For another four years I dry-ran new ideas, read different books, and went to Writing Project continuity meetings to keep my connection with the summer institute alive. And all the while I waited, waited for the event that would bring all of this together and a focus to my teaching of writing. I did not know it then, but that event was waiting for me in the shape of a study sabbatical at the University of Pittsburgh. The academic year 88-89 became the pivotal point in my evolution as a teacher.

I decided that the last thing I needed was an academic challenge for my sabbatical year; no Ph.D. for me, not even graduate - level classes. But I knew I wanted to write, so I took courses with a writing component. Through a set of very interesting circumstances, I also did an internship as a co-director of the Writing Project.

Here perhaps is where the real story begins. It was this year, back in school for the first time in 14 years, that writing to learn became a reality for me. A general studies course in world mythology required something called log entries. I had for years used personal journals in my own classroom, but this was an entirely different entity. There were questions on the board at the beginning of class each week, and we spent the first 20 minutes responding to them in writing which we then shared with the rest of the class. But these were not the standard, "What did the main character do at the top of page 34?" type that I had always used as guided reading questions with my own students. For the first time, a teacher asked my opinions about what was happening in the literature. She wanted to know if there was anything in my life that related to events I was reading. She wanted me to make connections, my own connections, between my reading and my reality. And she was not waiting until a final essay test to ask me these things. I did not have to agonize over form and grammar and all those other writing chains. These log entries were to be a way to write out what I was thinking, so that all of us could see it. And then the light bulb went on. This was what Calkins and Graves had been talking about, right here in action. This was a way to make writing work for me.

I was writing more as a student than I ever had before. Writing was a part of every class I took, from mythology to computer literacy. I made it work for me, and it made me work; this was the most intense thinking I had ever done. At the same time, my unique experience as a co-director of the Writing Project shaped my writing. No longer "just" a high school teacher, I used my perspective to help determine the course of the Project's goals and undertakings. Along with

all of this writing came the opportunity to share, to talk about writing. One afternoon, Linda Jordan, the assistant director of the Project and I, sat in the office for two hours and talked, just talked about writing; our own, the "experts", our friends'. Talk about a natural high. Some people become born-again Christians, I became a born-again writer.

As the song goes, though, "all good things must end sometime...", and so in the fall of 1989 I came back to my classroom. But I wasn't the same teacher or human being who had left. Finally, I saw a way to direct all the isolated writing paths I had tried to lead my students down. They all converged at the junction called "writing to learn".

I opened the file cabinet marked "literature", and gazed at stacks and stacks of "study guides" for every piece I had ever taught over the last 18 years, from Macbeth to The Outsiders. And then I closed it without touching a single piece of paper. I didn't throw them away. I wasn't sure how any of my new-found pedagogy would pan out. Better not burn any bridges just yet.

I began with my eleventh-grade Scholars, gifted students, to give my new ideas their best shot at success. Since this was new stuff to all of us, I spent two or three class periods modeling and explaining what was about to happen. Their faces were interesting to watch as I talked them through a typical log entry, one that would have to be entirely different from their neighbor's because no two people in the world have exactly the same experiences or think in exactly the same way. One by one, their faces registered emotions from bewilderment to chagrin as they realized that their days of copying the study guide answers from each other were over.

The shape of my students' reader response logs, as I came to call them, would need to be different from the ones I had used at the university. I decided numerous, specific questions would defeat my purpose, as would a totally open-ended "Write down what you think about your reading" approach. The first was too much like my locked-away study guides, and the second was too murky, too open for confusion. And so was born the Botkin approach to reader response logs, probably a compilation of influences from Toby Fulwiler and Bernie Glaze, eminent writers on the subject, and my own knowledge of how high schoolers think and operate.

Four questions would be my limit; my husband claims that is because I am Jewish. These four questions needed to be specific enough to get my students' thinking focused, but not so specific that they forced the kids to think along my lines instead of their own. I settled on: 1) **What did you learn from the reading?**, to make certain that they understood the reading on the literal level; 2) **Do you have any questions about what you learned?**, for the student to discover what he still needed to know; 3) **Do you have any opinions about what you learned?**, to offer the student the opportunity to intimately interact with the literature, to really say what was on his mind, to make the **connections** with the reading absent from my "What did the main character do at the top of page 34?" guided reading sheets; and 4) **Do you have any**

predictions?, once again to bring the student into the reading. Predictions require a reader to care about the characters and situations he faces; passivity becomes impossible.

Having thrown all four ingredients into the pot, I then sat back and watched the mixture brew. The first piece on which we tested the reader response logs was Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman. After I had read their first log entries, we shared them in class. No more "discussion insecurity" about covering all the important points for me; as the students read their logs, everything that was important to them came out, along with the classic dilemmas that Miller portrays. The real turning point in the evolution of the logs occurred the day I was totally extinguished. One student had written in his log that Biff's failure to finish high school and subsequent failure in life, was Willy's fault. This was in response to the "Do you have any opinions?" question, to the scene where Biff discovers his father in Boston with The Woman. Another student across the room shot back with, "How can you say that? You can't blame the whole rest of your life on some stupid mistake your father makes!" The original speaker then became so flustered at having opened his mouth in a discussion for the first time that year, that he had to resort to reading his log entry to make himself understood. I tried, I really did, to get into that conversation, to make what I thought were the appropriate teacher comments and evaluations, to help these kids synthesize their thoughts. But there was no need and no room for me. I was too new at this whole process to realize that the kids were taking over for me, doing all the teacher stuff I was so accustomed to doing. And they were so much better at it, because they knew themselves, each other, and their questions and concerns far better than I did. As more and more students entered the discussion that day, I sat back and listened. They went from Biff to other characters in the play, talking about how they all operated as a family, about futures, rotten parents who ruin your life out of love, destroyed dreams. The bell rang, and I was exhausted. Listening is hard work, sometimes harder than teaching.

My beliefs and courage bolstered, I decided to try the reader response logs with my tenth graders reading The Learning Tree. According to the curriculum that was not the way I was supposed to teach it, but I was willing to take the heat if I flopped. Other approaches I had tried over the years had flopped, so I was no stranger to dead lessons. I had a strong hunch, however, that the logs would fly, not flop.

I was right. One class in particular, my seventh-period "gift from God" as I called them, took to the logs immediately. Never reticent to express their opinions about anything, including vocabulary words, they wrote pages talking about how unfair his teacher was to Newt, how unfair life was to Blacks in the 1920's, how strong Newt's mother was, how much Newt loved Arcella and what a scumbucket Chauncey was to get her pregnant and then run away. They poured into the room, fighting over who would get a chance to read a log entry today. "I want to read today!"

Jason, the only boy in the class yelled at me before the bell rang to start class. "If you let Rhonda read first, her entries are so long and everybody fights about them so much that I'll never get a chance to read!" And there was the entry Mattie, the "log queen" wrote after the chapter where Polly, the "white cousin" was so ostracized by the Black community that she was forced to leave. Mattie wrote about her Grandpa Red, her "white grandfather" and his effects on her family. The class was entranced; they never knew about Grandpa Red, and many of them had known her for years. I certainly could never have written a study guide question that would have come any where near Mattie's needs. As a student once said to me, "The logs are neat because for the first time I am answering my own questions instead of yours." This was not the "student of the year" who came forth with a gem for this paper, nor did he do every single entry. But he saw their value for his purposes; he and Mattie both made the log entries work for them. As we traveled through The Learning Tree, I learned as much from the kids as they did from me, probably more. Listening to inner city African-American teenagers talk about racial hatred, being on the outside of society, fighting to prove who you are, gave me a whole new perspective on a book I already thought I "knew". And all of this came from the reader response logs.

No other assignment, approach, or idea has ever done for my teaching what the logs have done. I have never found so many different facets to my students' personalities, or the ways in which they learn. Through the logs, I have discovered them and how they think, and so, I believe, have they.

One of the final exam essay questions asked the tenth graders to choose the year's most productive learning activity. Some students chose the reader response logs. I knew Mattie would, and Rebecca, too, another student born to write logs. They said that the logs gave them the chance to get to know the characters in the book, to express how they felt about these characters and their actions. Rebecca wrote that she had never gotten to know a book as well as she had The Learning Tree. In a kind of backwards way, the logs were vindicated by the student who wrote about how he hated doing them. His reason? They made him think too much, and thinking was hard work. It was, he stated, easier to just read the book and not have to think about it. He's right. It is easier when there's no thinking. But it's impossible to write, unless we write garbage, without thinking. That is the invaluable lesson reader response logs have taught me and my students.

My teaching journey is far from over. Sometimes I wish I had those disastrous early years to do over, to have been part of the Writing Project earlier in my career. So many detours and bumps could have been softened or even avoided. But I think I needed to have those disasters to fully appreciate what the Project has done for my teaching and my belief in myself as a teacher. Had I never connected with the Project and the cherished friends and colleagues I have gained through it, my journey might very well still be going in circles. And a circle always lands you right back where you started.

Reaching Back, Moving Forward:
An Intergenerational Approach to Literacy and Literature

George R. Skornickel, Jr.
Highlands School District

At the conclusion of another year of teaching, in the summer of 1988, the usual feelings were felt: relief that another year had been brought to a successful conclusion, but also some depression. Although having tried to do a lot of interesting and innovative things in the classroom, there was a feeling that nothing "special" had happened. The year of teaching just concluded had seemed no different than those of the preceding ten years. It was a classic case of teacher burn-out. Usually, when a person is feeling burned-out they plan for some rest and relaxation. Instead of a week or two at the beach or a leisurely cruise to the Bahamas, a four week, nine to three, six credit course was scheduled at the University of Pittsburgh. Involvement as a Fellow of the Western Pennsylvania Writing Project (WPWP) began that summer.

The WPWP is an affiliate of the National Writing Project and is sponsored by the English Department of the University of Pittsburgh. The WPWP's Summer Institute in the Teaching of Writing is an intensive process-centered workshop based on the participants' experiences and valuing their expertise. The participants divided their time among three major activities: sharing effective classroom strategies for teaching writing; writing frequently and working in small response groups; and discussing current composition theory, research, and practice with visiting researchers and professional writers who are also teachers of writing.

Participating in the Institute and becoming more of a writer combated the feeling of burn-out. It not only provided the motivatation to try new techniques in the classroom, but also afforded the opportunity to network with other teachers who were also doing exciting things in their classrooms. "Reaching Back, Moving Forward" is a highly successful classroom project which came about as a direct result of being a Fellow of the WPWP.

In the winter of 1988, several Fellows were invited to spend the day with Eliot Wigginton at Peabody High School. Mr. Wigginton is founder of the Foxfire Project, which began as a class publication and has grown into an internationally respected example of student-centered learning. He spent the morning teaching two classes and discussing his teaching strategies. The afternoon consisted of an inservice workshop for the Peabody faculty which outlined his work with his students in Georgia.

Wigginton and his students focus most of their efforts upon learning and sharing all they can about the history and personal reminiscing of the people of Rabin County, Georgia. Discussions with him that day were the beginnings of the project "Reaching Back, Moving Forward," which would involve students in many of the same types of activities.

Most of the Foxfire activities involve students with older citizens of their community. Through the use of interviews, the students have been able to record an oral history of their community which would have otherwise been lost. It also provides an opportunity for the young people to form relationships with a generation that is often stereotyped and avoided.

"Reaching Back, Moving Forward" involved a group of twenty-four sixth grade students and six senior citizen volunteers. Before the volunteers even entered the school the students had to do some writing on the concept of "old". As expected, many of their pieces contained negative stereotyping. They primarily focused on the physical inadequacies they felt old people experienced, including: loss of hair, teeth and hearing; wrinkles; and the use of walkers. Very few had any positive comments. The next step was to divide them into groups of four, with one senior citizen volunteer per group. They were not very happy about having such a small student - volunteer ratio. Each group was provided with a tape recorder and a list of topics which included: a brief family history, school, holidays, superstitions, fads, and music.

As the volunteers entered the room for their first session, the tension was very evident on the part of the students. But once they asked their initial questions and the reminiscing started, the students were totally entranced. They discovered that the seniors were telling them things that they had no knowledge of. Many of the seniors began by comparing what their year in sixth grade was like. This resulted in quite a bit of laughter, especially when the topic of clothing was discussed.

The project progressed over a three month period and included fifteen sessions. Needless to say, there was a dramatic change in attitude concerning the concept of "old" on the part of the students. It was very apparent in their writing:

Old
Before we did the project on "OLD"
I always thought old was a dreadful time.
It really isn't.
It's the time when you look back at things,
Look at the photo album,
Think back to the good and bad times.
Old can also be a great time to share all your
love with your relatives,
Spending a lot of time with them.
Just don't think of old as a dreadful time,
Think of it as a remembering time.
- Carrie B.

Old
When I think of old, I think of people
who have grey hair and wrinkles.
When I think of old, I think of something
no one wants to be - something dreaded.

If no one wants to be old, then old must be
something terrible.
Maybe old is something terrible
because a lot of old people are cranky and mean.

But, then again, maybe old is
something wonderful.

When I think of old,
I think of my grandparents.
I know my grandparents are happy,
So part of old must be wonderful!

When I think of old,
I don't know what to think.
Is old good or bad?
I guess I'll never know
until I'm old

- Samantha C.

Old People
Old people remind me of
my grandma Drayer.

No matter if she's busy or not,
She always finds time to talk to me.

She talks about times long ago,
About the time when she was young.

She says she did not have the same
advantages as we do now.

I'm not so sure
about that.

To me she had advantages too.

- Kim M.

This is only a very small sampling of the pieces the students wrote, but they were all quite similar. The students found that the volunteers were not at all like the people they had envisioned.

The project was such a success that it has been used in a variety of ways over the last three years. The students now do quite a lot of memoir and autobiographical writing. This coming school year, a large number of senior citizen volunteers will once again be involved. The goal is to try to develop an oral history of the area by conducting interviews and writing prose and poetry about the industries, lifestyles, and ethnic heritage of the people in the community.

Whenever having read some of the pieces the students wrote during the original project, or seen the smiles on the faces of some who volunteered, the decision to have become a Fellow of

the Writing Project is truly gratifying. Although having heard of Foxfire and "Wig" prior to that, there never would have been the opportunity to meet him and receive the encouragement to pursue something which required a lot of additional work.

This story is typical of the Fellows in projects all across the country. Not only has the National Writing Project done a lot to promote the teaching of writing, it has also enabled a lot of excellent teachers to re-evaluate their careers, continuing them with some very exciting and important projects.

Promoting Literacy Through Bibliotherapy

Lelia Allen
Charles County Community College

Malcolm S. Knowles (1970), said that the primary and immediate mission of every adult educator is to help individuals satisfy their needs and achieve their goals. Today, this statement applies to all educators since children and youth today also face situations that necessitate their learning to problem solve, cope and develop their decision-making skills. Bibliotherapy is a time honored method of helping individuals learn these skills.

Wisdom has been passed from one generation to the other through storytelling since the dawn of time. Aesop, Jesus of Nazareth, and Uncle Remus are examples of teachers and story-tellers. In these times, the need for providing guidance for students while meeting their academic and literacy needs is as important or more important than ever. Parents, teachers, and other responsible individuals recognize that they need a method of helping students of all ages learn to make decisions, solve problems, and maintain relationships. Bibliotherapy can be a very effective method of providing guidance and support. There are needs at every stage of life, and there are reading materials for every problem of every age.

Shrodes (1960) defines bibliotherapy as "a process of interaction between the personality of the reader and the imaginative literature which may engage his emotions and free them for conscious and productive use." This is also a very legitimate therapeutic concern for today--the reader can be directed to materials relevant to personal needs and stages of development.

Zintz and Maggart (1986) stated in terms relevant to the literacy community that "Bibliotherapy is treatment through books" or "healing through books. Books, that is, printed materials, have different values for different people." The library of today has a wealth of literature for helping families deal with everything from birth to death.

Many of the traditional folk tales of every continent, such as those documented by the Grimm brothers, pass wisdom and guides for life to generation after generation. Recently developmental psychologists have recognized that development takes place throughout life, not just until we reach adulthood. These tasks of development are especially challenging today because of the increase in divorce, longer lives, and privileges and problems.

Havighurst (1974) has given us a very good description of the task of life. However, he did not provide a list of tasks for childhood. Therefore, the author developed a list of tasks for early childhood. The mastery of these tasks is crucial for the smooth transition from childhood to adolescence. Parents have historically used the fables and other folktales to teach the concepts needed for developing self-discipline, self-esteem and other attributes. Today's parents need to be reminded of the benefits that the family can enjoy from the pleasure of books.

Developmental Tasks of Early Childhood (Allen 1990)

- Learning basic boundaries of behavior--right and wrong
- Understanding ownership of personal property
- Understanding parental love and authority
- Learning family roles
- Learning to live with or without siblings
- Learning how to treat family, friends and pets
- Developing self-esteem
- Beginning academic learning
- Identifying talents
- Developing leisure time hobbies and interests

Havighurst's developmental tasks begin with adolescence and progress through late adulthood. Individuals at every stage in Havighurst's list can benefit from the real and creative experiences to be found in literature. The tasks are as follows:

Adolescence

1. Acquiring more mature social goals
2. Achieving a masculine or feminine gender role
3. Accepting changes in one's body and one's physique and using one's body effectively.
4. Achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults
5. Preparing for sex, marriage, and parenthood
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation
7. Developing a personal ideology and ethical standards
8. Assuming membership in the larger society.

In today's world more young people delay marriage, career and other responsibilities of full adulthood to attend college and graduate school. Others finish school and delay finding employment. Still others just decide to concentrate on their careers and not marry on a whim. They do not operate as full adults, but adolescent and other stages do not apply to them either. This is a stage presently referred to as youth. They can also be referred to as unlaunched adults since many in the group are quasi dependent on parents. This is especially true if something out of the ordinary causes them financial problems. Many of the developmental needs may be the same as adolescent or young adults but will vary individual to individual.

Developmental Tasks of Youth

1. Learning to take responsibility for self
2. Establishing an identity
3. Developing emotional stability
4. Getting started on a career
5. Establishing intimacy
6. Finding a mate
7. Maintaining one's own residence
8. Establishing ties to a social community
9. Deciding on parenthood

As youth move from past adolescent youth to early adulthood, new tasks emerge as crucial to life and home and are similar to youth but more definitive.

Developmental Tasks of Early Adulthood

1. Selecting a mate

2. Learning to live with a marriage partner
3. Starting a family
4. Rearing children
5. Managing a home
6. Getting started on an occupation
7. Taking on civic responsibility
8. Establishing a social network of friends

The stage of early adulthood leads to middle adulthood and an evolving set of new tasks to be attempted and mastered. As in other stages, if the individual has not mastered the tasks of the previous stage of development, a double set of task demands can complicate life; therefore, the individual should be conscious of bibliotherapy to assist in identifying tasks at every state of life. Also, if the tasks are not completed or mastered at the appropriate life stages, they will be well advised to seek help to facilitate double-stage mastery as soon as possible. This is especially true of the middle adult stage because the complications of late adulthood will be exacerbated without resolution of early adult tasks as listed below.

Developmental Tasks of Middle Adulthood

1. Achieving adult civic and social responsibility
2. Establishing and maintaining an economic standard of living
3. Developing adult leisure time activities
4. Assisting teenage children in becoming responsible and happy adults
5. Relating one's self to one's spouse as a person
6. Accepting and adjusting to the physiological changes of middle age
7. Adjusting to one's aging parents

The increased life span in the twentieth century has resulted in a much extended late adulthood. Advances in health care have caused us to not only live longer but enjoy better health longer. This has caused us to move the age lines designating late adulthood entry and some of the tasks. However, if we are fortunate, late adulthood and its accompanying tasks will arrive as follows:

Developmental Tasks of Late Adulthood

1. Adjusting to decreasing physical strength and health
2. Adjusting to retirement and reduced income
3. Adjusting to death of a spouse
4. Establishing an explicit affiliation with one's age group.
5. Adopting and adapting social roles in a flexible way
6. Establishing satisfactory physical living arrangements

In addition to tasks of development, technological advancements and modern society have fostered social problems for millions of families today that only a few faced in earlier decades. The youth and their families need both preventative and therapeutic assistance.

Bibliotherapy should be one of the measures the schools and parents use today to help families in adjusting to or overcoming problems. Some of these problems as identified by the author are as follows:

Home Problems

Single Parent Families
- Pre-divorce family dysfunction
- Divorce stress
- Changes in economic status
- Lost contact with family and friends
- Stressed parent
- Changed neighborhoods and schools
- Changes in family and extended family status

Latchkey Children
- Few extended families/insufficient after school child care
- Facing possible fear, boredom, loneliness, physical injury due to sibling conflict, accidents, and crime
- Allowing friends into the home
- Opening door to strangers in spite of parental warning
- Snacking on unhealthy food
- Excessive and unsupervised TV viewing
- Lack of help with homework

Impact of TV
- Observing violence, stereotyping and unfair/unhealthy consumer practices (a few exceptions exist such as The Children's Television Workshop which presents shows such as Sesame Street and Mister Rogers)
- Early exposure to adult sexuality and morality different from family beliefs

Bibliotherapy can be a preventive measure for many of the problems by providing a constructive leisure time activity when TV appropriate to the age group (especially children and adolescents) is not available.

Special Needs
- Needing special educational and related services in order to attain full potential (mentally retarded, learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, physically handicapped)
- Needing channels to develop self-esteem.
- Needing to adjust to only-child status
- Needing to grieve the loss of a loved one
- Moving to a new cultural environment or country
- Moving to new guardian arrangements
- Adjusting to a new step-parent, step-siblings, etc.

Gifted and Talented
- Gifted: intellectual
- Talented: musical, artistic, or other
- Needing age-appropriate challenges (gifted students drop out 3 to 5 times as often as non-gifted)
- Needing a self-teaching system for unidentified gifted (gifted girls and minorities are identified far less often and less accurately than gifted white males)
- Needing outside reading to maximize learning
- Needing a hobby that will minimize boredom

Drugs and Drinking
- Facing temptation without adequate knowledge of how to say no
- Living in dysfunctional families because of drugs and/or alcohol
- Adapting inappropriate rates of passage for adulthood

Youth Suicide

- High risk generation (in 1984, suicide was the second leading cause of death among Americans aged 15 to 24; one young person commits suicide every 1 hour and 45 minutes)

All of these problems need to be given attention if today's youngsters are to develop into healthy productive adults. In some instances, their very survival is at stake. Bibliotherapy must be considered as a part of multifaceted solution approach.

Bibliotherapy is a technique that helps to bring about respect for and understanding of cultural and generation diversity. Students who read Richard Wright's books together gain respect for the differences in obstacles faced by individuals of different racial or ethnic groups and generations as they seek viability. Non-black students who often felt their grandparents had arrived on Ellis Island with the same handicaps that African-Americans encountered, realize after reading Black Boy that there was a vast difference in the struggles of African-Americans, poor immigrants, or Caucasian youth from West Virginia or rural Pennsylvania. They also gain a respect of the support systems available to them today as they strive to improve their own lives through education and training.

Women struggling with the family opposition to their return to school or displaced homemakers questioning whether the pain justifies the struggle are inspired and directed by the chronicles of how others overcame similar or more difficult challenges.

The discussions to teach the concepts of comprehension also provide therapeutic group process-like results. Each student, whether in an individual or group setting, can get valuable life mastery support from the materials chosen for content teaching. The literacy professional or volunteer can glean from classic or newly released novels, magazine articles and poetry to develop a prescriptive curriculum.

All of the tasks of development and sociologically triggered problems of today can motivate dedicated teachers and parents to embrace bibliotherapy. Each of us probably has a personal reference for something we read that helped us to identify and develop solutions to problems at some point in our lives. However, we still need to recognize that even though the process is somewhat historic, today's educators and therapists recognize three primary areas crucial to bibliotherapy's effectiveness. These areas are: 1) identification of the problem from a personal and observer's viewpoint; 2) catharsis resulting from recognizing and sharing an emotional release from knowing the problem is not unique to them and relief is possible; 3) insights enhanced by viewing the problem with empathy and personal experience and the mistakes and solutions of the literary characters.

The bibliotherapeutic process of identification, catharsis, and insight help to motivate people of all ages. They help them begin to feel better about themselves and become more confident. They get to stand back and look at life's risks and rewards, their needs and problems,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

and they often begin to believe that they can "overcome". When the techniques of bibliotherapy are utilized, the reading or literacy students will receive the added benefits of therapy similar to group therapy.

For bibliotherapy to be effective, the volunteer or professional must be careful to do the following:

1. Select materials or books where the main character will contribute to self-esteem.
2. Select materials that are readable by the individual or group, or provide special techniques that do not require all the students to read orally.
3. Discussion should not be pressured or rigid. The individuals should be allowed a degree of "free association" discussion and questions. Book reports or other technical analyses that the students may feel insecure about should usually be avoided.
4. The parent, teacher, or volunteer must be prepared to circuitously direct the students to relevant portions of the selection that are implied, etc.
5. Interpretations that differ based on cultural diversity must be respected though analyzed for results of actions or effectiveness in problem solving.
6. Learn to use the bibliotherapy technique gradually. Select materials that are relevant to academic needs and learn bibliotherapy as you teach.

Today's children's literature authors write books that not only entertain but provide themes that parents and educators can select from based on youth's needs and problems. In addition, the library has a wealth of books and magazines that can help people in every stage of life to involve themselves and others in the bibliotherapeutic process of task resolution of problem-solving. Parents have historically used fables and other folktales to teach the concepts needed for developing self-discipline and other attributes. Today's parents need to be reminded of the benefits that the family can enjoy from the pleasure of books.

References

Havighurst, R. J. (1974). Developmental Tasks and Education, (3rd edition) New York. David McKay.

Knowles, M. S. (1970). The Modern Practice of Adult Education; Androgogy Versus Pedagogy. New York, Association Press.

Shrodes, C. (1960). Bibliotherapy an Appbeation - Psychoanalytic Theory. American Image 17 Fale.

Zintz, M. and Maggart, Z. R. (1986). Corrective Reading (5th edition) William C. Brown Company. Kerper Duboque, Iowa.

81

The Ethnic Mosaic: Multicultural Books for All Our Children

Joan Brest Friedberg

Beginning With Books

Where do I look?
What book,
On what shelf
Tells why I am?
- The Whispering Wind: Poetry by Young American Indians

Remember who you are, where you come from, and where you are going.
- Tewa prayer, Pueblo Indians Pueblo Boy: Growing Up in Two Worlds, Marcia Keegan, Dutton, 199

Having achieved a lifespan of six-plus decades, I realize I can look back at three chunks of time in considering cultural diversity in children's books: my own reading as a child growing up in the 1930's and 40's, the books I read to our children in the 1950's and 60's, and the books I see now in my professional capacity and as a grandmother. There have been enormous changes.

The books of my childhood focussed on families that were either American or European, usually Northern European. If American, they were white and Protestant. The characters were perhaps poor, but they weren't "foreign." Or Catholic. Or Jewish. If characters from other ethnic backgrounds appeared, they were generally not only poor, but uneducated, and they often talked funny. African-Americans were either comic characters, like the little boys in Booth Tarkington's Penrod, or they were virtuous and loyal...and poor. And African American characters certainly talked funny.

I grew up in one of two Jewish families in a small Massachusetts town; the dominant culture was WASP, although there were Catholic children in my school, of Italian, Irish, or French Canadian backgrounds, and again, usually poor. As far as I can remember, none of us except the white Protestants were mirrored in the books I read, unless as minor characters, usually depicted as socially inferior. Except for a book written and published for Jewish children, called The Adventures of K'Tonton, a Little Jewish Tom Thumb, I never heard or read a story book about a Jewish child. I remember that capital J's jumped out at me from the pages of books, partly because of my first name and partly because I never expected to see in print the word that described my religious and cultural background. In high school, I encountered my first Jewish character in literature, when we read Scott's Ivanhoe which had Rebecca, the beautiful Jewish young woman who didn't seem remotely like anyone I knew.

The books I read to my children a couple of decades later showed a growing recognition of ethnic diversity. When Laura Ingals Wilder describes Native Americans riding by, they represent for the child Laura a poignantly inaccessible freedom. Marguerite d'Angeli's Bright April pictures a black family. It's true that except for the color of the family in the illustrations they might just as well be white, but at least they were given the validity of center stage in a book, however scanty the portrayal of real African American family life. Sidney Taylor's All of a Kind series, on the other hand, was written from inside the Jewish American experience and carries more authenticity; it was a great favorite with my children. Leo Politi's picture books, like Angelo, the Naughty One, gave us Mexicans and Mexican Americans; Politi wrote about Chinese Americans (Moy Moy) and Italians as well. However, there were still big gaps; it's the few examples of multi-cultural books that stand out, without wide variety to chose from. And there were lapses: Mary Poppins still had the troubling stereotypical African family in the chapter called "Bad Tuesday," Nancy Drew had not cleaned up her act yet, and when I read Penrod to our children, I altered the dialect.

In the past 20-odd years, there have been dramatic changes. Our book stores and library shelves are crowded with books that depict a range of ethnic, cultural, and religious experiences - and also, of course, exhibit a spectrum of skill, accuracy, and taste in the writing and illustrating. Some describe situations common to many children, like Snowy Day, or The Stories Julian Tells; race and cultural identity are irrelevant in the narration of these everyday experiences. Others tell stories that are more closely tied to a particular heritage, for example, the work of Virginia Hamilton, John Steptoe, Patricia McKissick, Lawrence Yep, Yoshiko Uchida, Barbara Cohen, I.B. Singer, Sharon Bell Mathis, and others. Non-fiction writers like Milton Meltzer and Jean Fritz have contributed to a rich heritage for children.

The BEGINNING WITH BOOKS project works with low-income families, the majority of whom are African American. There are four programs. Three of them are directed to children from infancy to kindergarten age; one enrolls children ages 3 to 11. The books we concentrate on are for younger children. In each program, books are offered that represent a variety of cultures, not only the Caucasian and African American cultures dominant in Pittsburgh, but where possible, Asian, African, and Hispanic as well. Books are also looked for that show a variety of gender roles. And, since we are first of all intent on finding the best books out there, the ones that will entice both children and parents and sell themselves even in families where there is no tradition of reading aloud, that is what we look for - the best books out there.

There has been an encouraging response from parents. African American parents are delighted to have books in which their children can see themselves - books they didn't know about. After reading Jamaica's Find, one mother remarked, "It's so good to have a story where a black person does the right thing. Our children look at television and all they see is black people in

trouble." It is equally good for white children (and their parents) to have this exposure. At a Read-Aloud Parent Club that had both African American and Caucasian participants, there was an interesting discussion about the use of dialect in Patricia McKissick's Flossie and the Fox. All agreed that there was nothing demeaning about the dialect; on the contrary, they felt that it added an important dimension to the story. And one mother said, "When we hear Irish or Scottish dialect, we think it's great. It's the same with this." Some of the books we choose are about universal situations and relationships: Peter's Chair, for example, with sibling rivalry; Eat Up, Gemma, the story of a little girl who plays with her food and throws it away until her big brother comes up with a happy solution; Jamaica's Find, in which a little girl faces a moral dilemma. Someday, perhaps, the fact that books like these show ordinary non-white children in ordinary circumstances will not be worth a single comment, but right now, it is still being noticed. Other books that might be used are deeply rooted in cultural and ethnic backgrounds - like Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters or The Chalk Doll or The Most Beautiful Place In the World.

I was a fortunate child, raised by parents whose words and actions demonstrated their rejection of narrow prejudice. I do not think of myself as disadvantaged because I did not have books with Jewish protagonists, or books featuring other minority characters. However, there were great gaps in my reading and consequent ignorance about what it was like to be a child in South America or Africa. My own children fared better, but they too had limited exposure. Now my three-and-a-half year-old grandson, who begins to chant "Read it again!" before I reach the last page of When Africa Was Home, my two-year-old granddaughter one of whose favorites of the moment is More! More! More! Said the Baby, and the baby, Hannah, who alternately pores over and chews a board book featuring infants of at least three diverse racial strains, all will be better prepared to take their places in a multi-ethnic society.

There are some very ugly ideas blowing about in the world today. Ways must be found to bring up children who reject stereotypes and prejudice, who can take pride in their own heritage and recognize the value of the heritage of others. All of us can attest to the power of books. Writers, illustrators, and publishers must be supported and encouraged in continuing to give us attractive engaging books for young readers that reflect diversity. Teachers, librarians, parents, grandparents, and caregivers all must offer children a rich variety so that they can take pride in themselves and approach others with respectful curiosity and appreciation.

Writing Workshops for Children

Karen Waggoner

When Sally Alexander and I were first asked to teach a fiction writing workshop for children, we were provided with two invaluable resources. The first was a computer. We knew what a difference computers have made to our own writing, to our ability to get ideas down quickly, and to our willingness to revise and revise until something is just right; now our students would find it so easy to write and rewrite, they'd do it cheerfully. And it turned out to be wonderful - that sound of ten or fifteen sets of fingers clacking creatively on keyboards.

But it was our second resource that really provided the inspiration and showed us the way to teach this class. This is a book called The Art of Teaching Writing by Lucy Calkins. This book convinced us that our goal must be to focus on process rather than product; to teach the writer, not the writing; to know that it's not our job as teachers to "improve" the children's stories as much as it is to so involve the children with their writing that they see themselves as authors.

And not only as authors. One of the things we always ask at the beginning is this: **How many writing teachers do you see in this room?** Invariably, the kids point at us and say "two". When we shake our heads, they look around for any other adult present and wonder, "Three?" That's when we let them know that there are two plus ten or fifteen writing teachers here, and they're all important.

With a sense of authorship, with help from all the writing teachers in the room, the stories began to flow, and the children began to see that revision is not a punishment for failing to get it right the first time. Anne Morrow Lindbergh has said, "Writing is more than living; it is being conscious of living." Writers write because they want to understand their lives. Each writer comes to the page with experiences and hopes and fears that are unlike anyone else's. Surely this is true of the great novelists of our time.

Lucy Calkins believes it's true also of children. Each child has a primal need to write, to say, "This is **me**, this is **my** story, this is **my** truth." Treating this need with respect is the cornerstone of her philosophy. Imagine if we adults had come together for a summer writing workshop, full of thoughts about our lives, our families, our careers, our illnesses, our triumphs, our fears, our dreams. Imagine then if we were given an assignment to write about "The Day I was a Waterfall" or "My life as a Pencil". How much better, says Calkins, to ask children: what are the things you know about? What are the things you care about?

Freed and challenged in this way, the children who have participated in our workshop have come up with a variety of wonders we could never have assigned. Our first class of third through seventh graders yielded these stories:

- The journey of a girl who follows her cat on its nighttime wanderings
- The tale of a Ninja who froze with fear
- The story of friendship between a raccoon and an inchworm
- The adventures of Lunatic Larry
- A realistic family novel about a girl's involvement with archery
- The saga of a cat afraid of rats
- A faithful golden retriever's search for a new wife for the lighthouse keeper who is his master
- A disastrous ride at Universal Studios
- The quest of Sir Fredrick, the nervous knight
- A chapter book about friendships filled with realistic school dialogue
- And a highly unconventional fantasy about a boy who ate his shoe

How could these stories have ever been assigned?

Another person we've learned from is Donald Graves. Like Calkins, he believes **if it doesn't work for adults, it probably won't work for kids**. We like the idea that Donald Graves wants all teachers of writing to be writers themselves - to share with the children the joy and struggle of it all. And he's shown the importance of a strong connection between teaching writing and the reading of literature. Writers are readers and readers can be writers.

When Donald Graves visited Pittsburgh last fall, he began each workshop session by reading to the eighty or so teachers assembled. He read Sleeping Ugly by Jane Yolen. He read Flossie and the Fox by Patricia McKissick. I don't know about the other teachers present, but those at my table delighted in this. We do a lot of reading ourselves, we read aloud to children, but we hadn't been read to in a long time. Children of any age can "enjoy the taste of words, can be stimulated by the drama of events."

In our writing workshop, we try to strengthen the connection with literature by reading out loud. What better way to learn about character development than to hear the third chapter of Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt, in which we get to know the girl Winnie through her conversation with a toad? Or, what better weaving of setting, character and plot can we demonstrate than by reading the first chapter of Julie of the Wolves by Jean Craighead George? What more can you say about good beginnings than to read the first line of Charlotte's Web: "Where's Papa going with that axe?" And where could you find a classier ending than in the same book: "It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer. Charlotte was both."?

Finally, a third influence on our workshop was a delightful book by the author of the Soup novels for young people, Robert Newton Peck. His small book called Secrets of Successful Fiction is not revolutionary like Calkins or Graves, but it suggested to us some great tools for our mini-lessons that begin each workshop segment.

Whole Language Makes Learning Fun, Even in High School

Shandel Gilbert
University of Pittsburgh

Whole language and an example of its implementation in a high school English class is being discussed for three reasons: 1) in the research, most descriptions of whole language learning strategies focus on elementary or middle school classrooms; 2) when whole language is implemented in high school classrooms, it's generally used only for process writing; and 3) whole language is a learning turn-on; it energizes and empowers students.

Although education may be a serious business, students learn more when they're having fun, when they like the work they're doing. Traditionally, elementary and middle schools recognized this truism, to some extent, and promoted a bit of fun in the classroom (through the use of learning games, food prizes, character dress-up days, etc.). High school fun has generally been associated with social and extracurricular activities. In high schools, classroom fun was either an oxymoron or a reason to send for the vice principal.

Until now. Within a whole language framework, secondary English teachers (and other subject teachers as well) can make learning fun because it will be invested with meaning by the learner. (Whole language, having attacked and silenced much of the gibberish on the Tower of Basals, is slowly becoming the voice of language arts in the lower grades.)

What is whole language? It is a perspective which celebrates language in all its aspects: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Because language and thought develop together, and are related, whole language encourages language use to develop important thinking skills (Wells, 1990).

Whole language focuses on learning, not teaching. From a whole language perspective, the learner is important. The learner interacts with the message (through listening or reading) to make meaning of the message, to make sense of it. The learner writes to understand what he/she knows and to communicate that understanding (Mayher, 1990). Whole language assumes learning is active, interactive, and collaborative.

Whole language concentrates on the processes, not the products of learning. (Knowledge changes. What is true today may be an outdated theory tomorrow. However, the processes of meaning making - comprehending and communicating - remain, ready to be accessed for use with new data.)

Authentic literary texts and the learner's response to them are the core of the whole language curriculum. How does this make English class fun? High school English classes have always read authentic literary texts: Romeo and Juliet and A Tale of Two Cities, for example. Most students (in my experience) found neither of them fun reading. How would these classics

be handled differently when taught from the whole language perspective?

First of all, they wouldn't be taught. In a whole language classroom, the teacher is not an authoritarian know-it-all, nor the font of all knowledge (Newman, 1985). The teacher is a fellow learner, respectful of the other learners in the class, who helps students make meaning, sometimes their own meaning, from the texts. The teacher models a variety of learning techniques, permitting students to adopt those which suit both a student's needs and learning style.

Let's see how a whole language proponent would handle Romeo and Juliet. Before the students began reading the play, the teacher would use graphic organizers like word webs to help students discover and elaborate on what they already knew about the play. After the discussion, the teacher would announce that the students were to keep a journal as they read the play. The journal was to be a learning log, containing their comments about the play. The students were to take notice particularly of the characters Romeo and Juliet, and to decide, as the play develops, which of the two is more mature. The students were to note scenes and speeches which showed the maturity or immaturity of these characters and to comment.

The teacher would explain that the students were free to express their true feelings about all aspects of the play, as long as they didn't use street language to do so. At the end of each act the students would meet in a small group to share and discuss their journal comments. At the end of Act III and at the end of the play, the teacher would collect the journals for grading and comment. The journal entries would account for 40% of the grade on the Shakespeare unit.

The teacher would announce he/she was also keeping a journal and would share it with the class on a daily basis through the first act of the play. (Thus the teacher would model journal writing.)

The teacher would cast the play, assigning parts so that every student had the opportunity to play an important role at least once. The teacher would stage the play within the classroom, encouraging students to wear costumes (if possible), use props, and memorize lines if they'd like. Each scene would be discussed, as necessary, after the enactment. The teacher would announce that play participation accounted for 40% of the grade on the Shakespeare unit.

As a final assignment, the students would write a paper detailing which of the two, Romeo or Juliet, was the more mature, citing evidence from the play. This paper would account for 20% of the grade.

Notice there is no test but 60% of the grade is based on written responses. Notice how much use of language and language learning is going on in this class. Notice how much the students will learn about how a play works and the acting process. Notice the role of the teacher: he/she is the stage manager.

Notice how much fun these students will have learning Romeo and Juliet.

References

Anstey, M. (1986). Connecting writing and reading. In N. Stewart-Dore (Ed.), Writing and Reading to Learn (pp. 35-42). NSW, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association.

Baker, L. & Brown, A.L. (1984). Metacognitive skills and reading. In P.D. Pearson (Ed.), Handbook of Reading Research (pp. 353-394). New York: Longman.

Mayher, J. S. (1990). Toward uncommon sense literacy learning: Integrating reading and writing. In C. King & R. Bean (Eds.), Literacy Instruction: Practices, Problems, Promises (pp. 3-12). Proceedings of the 37th Annual Conference and Course on Literacy, June, 1990. Pittsburgh: School of Education, IPRE, University of Pittsburgh.

Newman, J. M. (1985). Using children's books to teach reading. In J. Newman (Ed.), Whole Language: Theory in Use (pp.55-64). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Rumelhart, D.E. (1980). Schemata: The building blocks of cognition. In R.J. Spiro, B.C. Bruce, & W.F. Brewer (Eds.), Theoretical Issues in Reading Comprehension (pp. 33-58). Lawrence Earlbaum.

Wells, D. (1990). Assessing readers and writers in primary whole language classrooms. In C. King & R. Bean (Eds.), Literacy Instruction: Practices, Problems, Promises (pp. 68-70). Proceedings of the 37th Annual Conference and Course on Literacy, June, 1990. Pittsburgh: School of Education, IPRE, University of Pittsburgh.

Ownership

Marion E. Gosson
Winchester Thurston School

Ownership is one of the recurring themes of the 1991 Literacy Conference; however, it mostly entails the ownership of the children and their opportunities to make choices in their learning, such as the books they read. Here, ownership is addressed as it pertains to the day to day, year to year decisions teachers must make to provide children with an instructionally appropriate environment, program, and curriculum. While often it is the school district and/or the administrators who make these decisions, teachers should be empowered to make these important judgements based on their expertise and knowledge of the children they teach.

Ownership was chosen as the subject partly because of what is seen as the present confusion in the field of reading, concerning basal versus whole language. I, too, am in a dilemma. My school is making educational decisions which affect my teaching and the children's learning. I need to be apprised of the latest research findings and what they mean in practical terms. I am in a position to make some decisions for the children in my classroom, and I want to make educationally sound ones for their benefit.

For years basal instruction has been at the core of my school's reading program. I introduced paperbacks into my third grade curriculum through a pioneer unit in social studies. To give the girls the flavor of what it was to actually be a pioneer, Little House on the Prairie and Caddie Woodlawn were read in two reading groups based on ability with the better readers using Caddie Woodlawn. That was eight years and two different basal series ago. Selected for its whole language approach, a third basal series will be implemented in third grade this Fall. The literature already being used in my room, however, is more substantial than any reading series and comes closer to an integrated whole language program.

Based on the many conferences I have attended, and in particular my instruction as a Pennsylvania writing teacher/consultant, I began to move more and more toward literature-based reading instruction. The positive results with the children's reading of the historical fiction paperbacks motivated me to try other quality literature in my classroom. Consequently, each year less and less of the basal and its accompanying work sheets, workbooks and tests have been used. Exchanging real books for "contrived materials" is essential for improved learning in children (Pace, 1991).

No whole language formula exists, and this is part of what is causing the confusion. Still, teachers need to probe beliefs about literacy development while choosing and developing literature-based instructional activities consistent with holistic views (Pace, 1991). And that is what I would like to continue to do - provide authentic experiences for children while they become invested in

their own literacy.

Part of the problem is also phonics instruction. For many years the second grade teachers would recommend those children who they felt would benefit from continued work in this area. The third grade budget would then include phonics books for those children. The basal series contained phonics lessons, too, so I believed we were doing more than necessary. Consequently, phonics books have not been ordered for the last three years, and the children have been doing just as well. Lending credence to this judgement is Carol Fuhler's statement that phonics should be taught early and end by second grade (Fuhler, 1990). Those children requiring more phonics receive special help from our Intermediate Unit reading teacher, and elimination of extra phonics has allowed more time for actual reading.

Children have always been ability grouped for reading instruction at the school beginning in first grade. Each year the second grade teachers send the children to me with their reading group assignments and scores. They are retested in the fall to see if there are any reasons to change their group assignment. This past year, they all came ready to begin the first third grade reader despite the fact that ability groups were recom-mended. It was decided, instead, to teach the entire class using whole group instruction.

Only the first third grade reader, the 3-1, was used with accompanying vocabulary workbooks and some pages in the regular workbooks. Like Reutzel (1991) and others, I believe that altogether too much time is spent needlessly on workbooks and work sheets. For assessment, the vocabulary and section tests were administered, but no separate skills tests were given. The whole group basal reading instruction went well. There were none of the children or parent complaints and anxieties normally associated with being put into an ability group, as in the past. Self-esteem was enhanced.

When the first basal was completed, the children were divided into two reading groups heterogeneously by ranking the class and then dividing it in half and assigning reading partners (total: 16 students, student #1 paired with student #8, student #2 paired with student #9, etc. and assigning pair #1 and #8 to group one, and pair #2 and #9 to group two, etc.). This produced two groups of varied reading abilities based on their fall Gates-MacGinite reading scores.

The smaller heterogeneous groups used paperbacks with accompanying teacher-made study sheets, which include vocabulary in context exercises and comprehension questions. The children were encouraged to seek help from their reading partners as necessary. Before beginning this new reading configuration, however, the role and responsibility of reading partners were discussed, such as help with strategies or clarification of questions. In addition, the children read with their partners after reading the selection silently, and then they did their choice of other language activities, such as author research using books, periodicals and tapes, extended writing activities and creative projects like dioramas and puppets.

Also incorporated into the reading program were mini-lessons for the whole class, much like what is done in writing workshops, on such topics as character development and teaching the children how to use character weave charts for collecting information about the main characters in their stories so that they can write character sketches, etc. The reading-writing processes learned through the integrated curriculum continue in and out of school and positively affect students' self-worth (Routman, 1988). Results from these smaller groups were very positive with continued good feelings of self-esteem, cooperative and shared learning experiences, lively discussions and a sense of children enjoying reading.

The prospect for this year's reading program is very exciting, based on my evaluation and the realization that the decision-making power is mine. Much more modeling will be done, especially of reading strategies to discover and explore meaning together with the children, as recommended during the literacy conference, and the children will be prepared for each new learning experience.

Routman states that it is easy and advisable to vary grouping structure with competent third grade readers (Routman, 1988). Additionally, then, a combination of whole class, small group, partners and individual instruction configurations will be utilized, and groupings will vary to fit the purposes of the lessons. Creating contexts for literacy in classrooms is a complex task, and what is needed is multiple classroom contexts (Heibert, 1991). Who must match contexts and processes? Who must determine what is the best course of action? It is the classroom teacher, the one in charge and with the best view and understanding of the children and the instructional program. It is, therefore, the teachers responsibility to make such determinations.

The basal will continue to be supplemented with other good literature, but the primary goal will be to eventually replace the basal entirely. In addition to coordinating real books with the reading series, I will exercise my professional right to be selective about the new materials during this first year of use. To prepare for this, time will be allotted this summer for an overview of the program and familiarization with the series.

In her article, Reutzel discusses how reading can be reorganized to rekindle a sense of joy and ownership, and she outlines Nancie Atwell's reading workshop rules (Reutzel, 1991). This coming year I plan to experiment further with my reading program in an attempt to more closely align it with what is called a reading workshop, including student goal setting, Sustained Silent Reading, sharing, reading journals, etc. First, the new reading series will be completed with adaptations and deletions as efficacy warrants.

Teachers do need to become "professional kid-watchers" and have the latitude to pick and choose from the basal materials, fitting them to the child's needs (Fuhler, 1990). As I observe and appraise the children, I will be better able to support those interactions which will help move them closer to independence in their reading. Through individual conferences with each child,

awareness of their progress toward their reading goals will provide opportunities to capitalize on their strengths and address their weaknesses. This teacher/learner collaboration will serve to support each child's acquisition of literacy as it assumes the child's competence (Beed, 1991).

These questions must remain constant: How and why are we doing what we're doing? How do children learn? Do we have a theory of learning we can apply to our teaching? Are the children in our classrooms joyful and confident about their learning? Who is in charge? The way we teach is critical to the development of active literacy. An actively literate person is constantly thinking, learning, and reflecting, and is assuming the responsibility for continued growth in personal literacy (Routman, 1988). It is necessary for teachers to have a sound educational philosophy that is supported by current research findings, and we must be in charge of our classrooms to free our children and ourselves to grow through our experience and our choices.

References

Beed, Penny L., Hawkins, E. Marie, and Roller, Cathy M. (1991). Moving learners toward independence: The power of scaffolded instruction. The Reading Teacher,44 (9), 648-655.

Fuhler, Carol J. (1990). Let's move toward literature-based reading instruction. The Reading Teacher, 43 (4), 312-315.

Heibert, Efreida H. (1991). Research Directions: Literacy Contexts and Literacy Processes. Language Arts, 68 (2), 134-139.

Pace, Glennellen (1991). When Teachers Use Literature for Literacy Instruction: Ways That Constrain, Ways That Free. Language Arts, 68 (1), 12-25.

Reutzel, D. Ray and Cooter, Jr., Robert B. (1991). Organizing for effective instruction: The Reading Workshop. The Reading Teacher, 44 (8), 548-554.

Routman, Regie (1988). Transitions. Aukland, New Zealand: Heinemann.

World War II: Through the Eyes of Literature

Elizabeth Tihey Harbist and Edith P. Jones
St. Edmund's Academy

"...and I want you all to remember - that you must not dream yourselves back to the times before war, but the dream for you all, young and old, must be to create an ideal of human decency..." (Number the Stars, Lowry 1989).

What place does this statement have in a fifth grade curriculum? Is it worthy of discussion? Is it significant? The statement not only belongs in a fifth grade curriculum, but it is crucial for students at this early level to be able to make sense of World War II and its aftermath.

Social studies texts have recently been criticized for their bias, or lack of such, regarding the effects this has on what children learn or do not learn about American history. Reading instruction has undergone a transition in which children's literature is altering the exclusive use of basal readers. The following project describes how the use of literature was combined with a major social studies unit in order to more fully enhance the student's experience of studying this war.

The 1990-1991 academic year in the fifth grade at St. Edmund's Academy involved a complete transition in reading instruction from basal readers to literature-based reading instruction. A wide array of authors was read with a strong emphasis on using historical fiction to complement the study of American history. The last social studies unit of the year was World War II. Selecting which book or books to use for this unit led to months of agonization, as there were many wonderful books from which to choose. Number the Stars by Lois Lowry, The Upstairs Room by Johanna Reiss, The Cage by Ruth Minsky Sender, and Escape from Warsaw by Ian Serrailler were only a few under consideration. After many discussions, it was decided to use several novels, in truth, as many as could be purchased. Would this be manageable? Would control be lost? How would comprehension be measured? How could these books be used to potential? Could this really be pulled off?

An overall goal for the unit was set which stated that through the reading of several books set during World War II, students would enhance their understanding of the personal sacrifices, tragedies, and triumphs, as well as collaborative efforts to improve the quality of life which occurred during that time. In order to connect the ideals expressed above in the young Resistance fighter's quote from Number the Stars, and similar expressions of human decency in the other novels of this time period, it was attempted to engage students in learning activities centered around the literature.

Reading, thinking, brainstorming, writing and planning took place separately. Then sharing, talking, brainstorming, rewriting and planning occurred together. The collaborative project was successfully implemented in late May 1991. What follows is an in-depth description

of the project's goals, procedures, and evaluations. Finally, a section for reflections and revisions is included.

Goals

Students will experience World War II through the eyes of other people who lived during this period of history.

By understanding the persecution of the Jews, the Holocaust, and the occupation of Europe, students will develop a more global view of World War II.

Procedures

1. **Book selection.** Having a feeling for the students' reading likes and dislikes, the first book was assigned to the students. They were asked to read the book, and to later recommend the book to friends. It was intended that the children provide the impetus for each other to read the second, third, fourth, and fifth books. Students were asked to read at least three books; many read more. Parental consent was required for certain books containing blasphemous language or explicit descriptions of concentration camp "life".

2. **Book reviews.** Based on Nancie Atwell's "Prompts for Learning Log Entries", (Atwell, 1990) a generic book review form was developed. Students were required to complete a book review form for at least three books.

3. **Journal writing.** Also an Atwell idea, (Atwell, 1987) students and teachers had kept reading journals all year. Students were asked to continue their journal for this project.

4. **Read-aloud.** It was felt that Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes (Coerr, 1977) was a must for all students. U.S. history is often slanted toward American interests and feelings. It was believed that the children needed more. They needed to see the consequences of how America ended the war. This was not intended to develop shame, but an understanding of what is meant to "two sides to every story."

Sadako was perfect for reading aloud. Our fifth graders, assembled on the floor of the classroom, were mesmerized by the account of Sadako's fight with and defeat by leukemia. As their teachers cried, the students saw first hand what literature can and does do. Literature has the power to move people to laughter, anger and tears.

5. **Cooperative groups.** The purpose of the cooperative groups was to provide opportunities for students to discuss their favorite book from the list, delve into extension activities, and eventually to produce an oral presentation. Based on the Johnson and Johnson model of cooperative learning (Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec, 1991), groups were formed and responsibilities outlined. Students selected the novel for this study. Group size was limited to a maximum of four students. Their responsibilities were as follows:

- Summary of the novel

- Discussion of character development
- Discussion of the author
- Preparation of a visual interpretation of the novel (mural, map, collage, etc.).

Each group decided how the responsibilities would be fulfilled. The group members practiced cooperative learning skills of asking for clarification, making sure everyone participated in discussions, and in encouraging group members. To guide their work, a teacher-prepared list of questions was handed out. Teachers circulated, checking for understanding.

6. **Oral book reviews.** A Book Review Tea was planned so that students could present their work in cooperative learning groups. Parents, grandparents, teachers, administrators, secretaries, and friends were invited and willingly read books from the recommended list before the big day. They came prepared to listen, discuss, and share their enjoyment of reading with our children.

Displays of the books and the children's visual interpretations of the novels decorated the lunch room. The groups presented their novels to the guests, and soon after the students were hurrying to the displays for a book to share with an adult. The formal presentations gave way to informal discussions over refreshments. Everyone was engaged in discussing, questioning, sharing, and enjoying excellent literature.

Evaluation

Evaluation took the form of journal entries, book reviews completed for each novel, and reviewer's critique sheets completed by the guests, a student's evaluation form, and teacher observations. Through the children's writing, it was possible to determine students' understanding of the novels, as well as identify those who needed clarification and comprehension assistance.

The observations which involved teachers' participation in group discussions were very valuable. Teacher- and student-generated questions promoted thinking and meaning making of text. Through discussion and observation students were seen in the process of "coming to know" (Atwell, 1990). It was evident that the children enjoyed reading the novels, interacting with each other about them, and learning about World War II.

The visual interpretations were also a means of evaluation. The visual interpretation of the novel and the students' explanations of their visuals provided additional information about what the students learned.

Were the objectives set at the beginning of this unit met? In addition to the high scores on the social studies test on this unit (M=85%) the discussions in social studies classes during this unit indicated that the objectives had been attained. Students asked many questions which were not based on the text. They wanted to know more about the occupation of Europe, they also wanted to know about the Resistance Movement; neither of which were more than scantily mentioned in the text. Students who had been previously grouped according to "ability" were

instead reading the same books and having incredible discussions about Jewish persecution, the Resistance movement, the atomic bomb, and a host of other subjects.

Reflections and Revisions

The project was successful because the students enjoyed reading, learned about World War II, and met the various goals and objectives of the unit. There seemed to be duplication in the individual book reviews and the cooperative group work. The students did not grumble, but it was obvious that something was missing. The written work completed by the students and the guests was helpful, but time consuming and overly cumbersome. After reading and reviewing Dr. Hartman's work on intertextual comprehension (Hartman, 1990), the necessary cohesion was obvious. The goal states that students will "enhance their understanding of the personal sacrifices, tragedies, and triumphs, as wells as collaborative efforts to improve the quality of life." In order to do so, students need to see the connections shared among all the individuals who lived through the tragedy of World War II.

Common attributes, for example, in these novels may easily be identified as a love of life, a determination that good will triumph over evil, and that freedom is a state of mind. In The Devil's Arithmetic, by Jane Yolen, the Jewish children kept their secret library, because by reading books they could remain free. In The Cage by Ruth Minsky Sender, Rivka wrote because through her words she could maintain free; it was her power and energy to fight.

Using Hartman's framework and literature study groups (Keegan and Shrake, 1991) the following procedure is recommended to combine and streamline the book reviews, cooperative work, and oral book reviews:

1. Students read novels.
2. In literature study groups students discuss each novel using focus questions.
3. In cooperative groups, students identify and discuss connections among texts, using teacher's focus questions. Each group prepares an oral presentation designed to highlight the connections identified among the texts the students have read.
4. The group prepares an artifact (similar to the visual interpretation).

Cooperative group members need to have read some of the same novels in order to identify connections. This may appear problematic, but the thirty-six students in this year's fifth grade read a total of one-hundred sixty novels in a little over three weeks. The connections must also include the social studies text, and a read-aloud such as Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes.

Hartman's continuum are already in place. Student selected and pre-selected text, individual and group activities, and types of artifacts provide variety. The recommended texts should be expanded to include semiotic texts. The journal writing and read-aloud should continue without change. The direction provided by Hartman's intertextual comprehension framework should further enhance student understanding of World War II.

If there was any doubt whether or not the students were responding favorably to this unit, this was settled on the final full day of school when the novels were to be collected and put away for the summer. Only two half days of school remained. Several students refused to turn in their books. That was a first! Who ever heard of students not turning in their books at the end of the school year? When attempting to collect these books, the comments ranged from, "I'm not done yet and I still have until Friday to turn it in" to "My mother is reading the book and promises to be done in time to turn in the book."

Could it really be pulled off? Yes. Was control lost? In the traditional sense, yes. Could twenty plus books all be used at the same time? Yes. Was comprehension measured adequately? Yes. Had literature been used in such a way that we enhanced the students' study of World War II? Yes. This was a celebration of reading!

Recommended Reading List: World War II

Bishop, Claire Hutchet	Twenty and Ten
Coerr, Eleanor	Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes
Frank, Anne	Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*
Green, Betty	Summer of My German Soldier
Hautzig, Esther	The Endless Steppe
Holm, Anne	North to Freedom
Kerr, Judith	When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit
Koehn, Ilse	Mischling (second degree)
Kuchler-Silberman, Lena	My Hundred Children
Lowry, Lois	Number the Stars (Newberry Medal)
Magorian, Michelle	Good Night, Mr. Tom
Matas, Carol	Lisa's War
Reiss, Johanna	The Upstairs Room* (Newberry Honor)
Richter, Hans Peter	Friedrich
	I Was There
Roth-Hano, Renee	Touch Wood
Sender, Ruth Minsky	The Cage*
Serraillier, Ian	Escape From Warsaw
Uchida, Yoshiko	Journey to Topaz
	Journey Home
Vos, Ida	Hide and Seek
Yolen, Jane	The Devil's Arithmetic* (National Jewish Book Award)

* Parental Permission Required

References

Atwell, N. (1987). In the Middle Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents. (pp.193-194) Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.

Atwell, N. edit. (1990). Coming to know Writing to Learn in the Intermediate Grades. (pp.167-184) Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.

Coerr, E. (1977). Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes. NY: Dell Paperback.

Hartman, D.K. (1990). Developing Intertextual Comprehension: Students Reading Multiple Texts, Literacy Instruction: Practices, Problems, Promises, Proceedings of the 37th Annual Conference and Course on Literacy. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh, School of Education.

Johnson, D., Johnson, R., and Holubec, E.J. (1991). Cooperation in the Classroom. Edina, Minnesota: Interaction Book Company.

Keegan, S. and Shrake, K. (1991). Literature study groups: An alternative to ability grouping. The Reading Teacher, 44 (8), 542-547.

Lowry, Lois (1989). Number the Stars. (p. 137) New York, NY: Dell Publishing.

Middle School Student Papers

Introduction

Patricia Thomas

University of Pittsburgh

I am proud to submit the compositions written by 7th and 8th grade students from Frick International Studies Academy. These students took part in an after school tutoring program sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh and the Pennsylvania Literacy Corps. The Corps project was funded by a Grant to the School of Education from PennServe, Governor Casey's Office of Citizen Service. The School of Education sponsored a credit-bearing course which teaches the skills needed for a student to become a literacy tutor and requires the student to practice those skills as a volunteer at Frick International Studies Academy for at least 40 hours over the term. I hope you enjoy reading the writing of these five Middle School students as much as I did.

Being Black in America

Sahara Bey

Being black in America is not easy at all. Besides dealing with the problems of life, you have to put up with ignorance and racism.

As a black you just do not worry about life, you have to worry about the way someone judges you as soon as they hear that you are black or see that you are black. You feel rejected, and it hurts to see that nobody is doing any thing about it right now. I remember growing up and my mom telling me to be careful about going outside. She said that it could be dangerous, but I never took her words for it until I got my feelings hurt. she said to me, "It's ok, baby. I never thought that I'd see the day that your feelings would get hurt like mine."

I experienced things such as walking down the street having white people suck their teeth as they see me and have gone to the shopping mall and had a white sales person come to me and have a bad attitude and not serve me with respect. I had to file a complaint on the way she had acted. There was no need for her to be that way towards me at all. Another thing my mother was right about was that life is not as easy as it looks on television.

So many feelings have been brought out as pain when I have been turned down as a young American black girl. I was living in a neighborhood and I always wanted to play with this young girl but her parents would not allow it. As a matter of fact they even got their dog after me, and I had a hard time trying to out run the dog. When I tell the dog was behind me I said let god help me, and he did. the dog tore my clothes and left but what shocked me was when I was crying a white women came outside in her socks and carried me to my home. I was shocked to know that she was different than everybody in that neighborhood. A case like this is a good sign.

Growing up can be a pain but you must learn how to cope with such as this. My mother had told me things that I never thought would happen to me but as she says she has been living longer than I have and has turned more corners than I ever will and that is when she tells me something. I am proud to know that I should be proud to be BLACK IN AMERICA.

Untitled

Edward Caldwell

When I graduate from high school I am going to go to college to learn law. I want to be a police officer and lawyer and then a judge. The reason why I want to be all of these is because I want to help people. Ever since I was born people have been helping me, so I want to return the favor by helping them. I want to thank all the people who have helped me. I will try to help you the best I can. I just might have you in my court room one day and I will try my best to help you win the case. This is why I want to be these three things.

When I Grow Up

Brandy Fleming

When I grow up I want to be a beautician. I want to be a beautician because I like doing other people's hair. I have already done my friends hair and I enjoy experimenting! I am not very good at doing hair, but when I get to high school I am going to take classes to learn how to be the best beautician ever.

My Scariest Experience

Maurice Harvey

My scariest experience was when I was in kindergarten. It was at the end of the day and at the end of every day we would sing a song and the teacher would give us a piece of candy. Well this day my teacher was all out of soft candy and the only thing she had left was hard candy. So we sang our song, "One for the money, two for the show, three to get ready and four to go." After that the teacher gave us our piece of hard candy, and like any other day I was real anxious to open it. So when I opened it, I popped it in my mouth and it slid right down my throat. I did not know what to do so I ran to the teacher and grabbed her around the waist. When she looked down at me and saw that I was choking, she started patting me on my back. Meanwhile, what I was thinking was "Oh god, I am going to die!" So when the teacher saw that the patting me on my back was not working she started to perform the Heimlich maneuver. As soon as she did that for a couple of seconds, the piece of candy flew out and I was relieved. And ever since I was five years old until I was eleven years old I was not allowed to eat any more hard candy. The was the scariest moment I every had!

Untitled

Erica Hatcher

When I grow up, I want to be a nurse. I would like to be a part of helping people in need. Nursing is a very important job because, without nurses, doctors would not have any assistants to take care of their patients after surgery. I realize how important nursing is because, when I was younger, I needed the care of a nurse. I was almost ten years old when I had a terrible accident. I was riding my bike down a hillside. There was a fence at the bottom of the hill. As I lost control of my bike, I started heading toward the fence at the bottom of the hill. I crashed into the fence and ended up with a huge bump on my head, I was immediately rushed to the hospital, and I remember that the nurses were very helpful. One of the nurses stayed with me through my entire day at the hospital. I want to be able to help people someday the way that the nurse helped me.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE